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IPEC

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

IPEC Evaluation

Sub-regional Project for the Progressive Elimination of Child Labor in the Coffee Sector in Central America and the Dominican Republic

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VOLUME I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND EVALUATION REPORT

A Final Independent Project Evaluation by

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**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT ON THE SUBREGIONAL
PROJECT FOR THE PROGRESSIVE ELIMINATION OF
CHILD LABOR IN THE COFFEE SECTOR IN CENTRAL
AMERICA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

VOLUME I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

August 2003

A) Description of the intervention evaluated

1. The following is the executive summary of the final evaluation of the activities implemented by ILO/IPEC (the executing agency) to combat child labor in the coffee sector in Central America, financed principally by the United States Department of Labor-USDOL (the donor agency).
2. The evaluation relates to a subregional project described in a project formulation document. The project structure proposed intervening in six countries (the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala) for a period of 41 months, with a budget of US\$1,169,503, and a projected starting date of November 1999.
3. The Subregional Project includes six National Projects, with their respective documents (PRODOC) that describe actions for a total of US\$4,942,686, and propose the same intervention structure as the Subregional Project, which consists of one objective (“to prevent and progressively eliminate child labor in the coffee sector”) and four results: (i) to provide families with viable alternatives, through social protection measures, including training parents in income-generating alternatives, providing funds for micro-enterprises and technical assistance to families to increase productivity, and other social measures to facilitate access to health and education; (ii) to mobilize and raise the awareness of the population and to work with the other actors (whose capacities the project also seeks to enhance) to prevent child labor; (iii) to design and implement a child labor monitoring system; and (iv) to promote exchanges of experiences at the national and regional level.
4. Some of the measures arising from this intervention structure were intended to be directly executed by ILO/IPEC and others with the collaboration of “implementing agencies.” The participation of implementing agencies gives rise to the so-called “Action Programs.” A total of 18 Action Programs are included in the National Projects, according to the following outline:

No.	Area	Action Program	Implementing agency
1	Turrialba – CR	Education and awareness raising	CENTROSOL
2	Turrialba – CR	Alternative income generation	ACSOL
3	Guanacaste – CR	Education and awareness raising	DNI
4	Guanacaste – CR	Alternative income generation	Hijos del Campo
5	Ocoa – DR	Education, health, awareness & alternatives	ADESJO
6	Matagalpa – N	Education awareness raising & health	CECESMA
7	Matagalpa – N	Alternative income generation	ASOCAFEMAT
8	Jinotega – N	Education awareness raising & health	La Cuculmeca
9	Jinotega – N	Alternative income generation	ASOCAFEJI
10	San Marcos – G	Education	FUNRURAL
11	San Marcos – G	Health	HOPE

No.	Area	Action Program	Implementing agency
12	San Marcos – G	Awareness raising	Coopedegua
13	San Marcos – G	Alternative income generation	Pastoral Social
14	La Trinidad – H	Education and awareness raising	CIPE Consultants
15	La Trinidad – H	Health	HOPE
16	La Trinidad – H	Alternative income generation	?
17	Ataco Juayúa – ES	Education awareness raising & health	ÁGAPE
18	Ataco Juayúa – ES	Alternative income generation	ASAPROSAR

B) Principal findings and lessons learned

5. The mission for the final evaluation of the activities implemented by ILO/IPEC to combat child labor in the coffee sector in Central America and in the Dominican Republic, financed principally by USDOL, has been able to identify some findings and lessons learned that should be underscored, in view of their intrinsic interest and their importance for similar interventions. The most relevant ones are summarized below.
6. The intervention has been able to point up a problem – that of child labor in the coffee sector in the countries of Central America and in the Dominican Republic. Previously, this issue had tended to remain hidden or, at the very least, it was perceived to be much less significant than has been demonstrated by the actions undertaken. The “invisibility” of child labor in this sector was the first obstacle to promoting an effective solution to a situation, the gravity of which was unknown previously. There was a tendency to consider that child labor in the coffee sector was relatively limited and not very important, related mainly to tasks supporting domestic activities. The Project has ended this simplistic vision of a reality that is much more complex and evidently more serious than revealed in public or private by the institutions and groups involved.
7. The actions promoted by the Project have generated important processes of learning and clarifying concepts. Indeed, the reality of the different forms of child labor in the coffee sector has proved to be much more complex than initially considered. The accumulated experience will permit a more precise definition of a multi-dimensional phenomenon.
8. The recognition of the problem by the public authorities and the private entities of the countries involved, and their subsequent awareness of the need to promote initiatives aimed at resolving it, has been a direct consequence of this revelation of the reality of child labor. Thus:
 - The involvement of the Ministries of Labor is very significant in this respect and indicates a positive trend that should be acknowledged.

- Child labor has been included on the agenda of many public institutions in the region, which reveals the growing commitment of Governments to the issue.
 - Likewise, the problem of child labor has been introduced into the discourse and actions of some particularly significant private entities, such as the prototype example of the region's business associations.
9. Accordingly, the Project has led to the conclusion that the causes of the problem of child labor are more complex than initially considered and need a more detailed examination. The only possibility of having a significant impact on its elimination would involve encouraging global interventions that act simultaneously on the different components that give rise to this situation. An improvement in the economic conditions of the environment in which situations of child labor are detected does not, by itself, guarantee the elimination of the phenomenon. It also seems important to have an impact on aspects relating to awareness-raising, the implementation of more effective monitoring and control systems, and an improvement in the education and health conditions of the boys and girls and of their families (regarding the latter, it is particularly necessary to promote actions that help reduce the costs that health and education services represent for the families).
 10. Institutional coordination at the national and regional level is a key element for implementing effective actions that contribute to eliminating child labor. Bearing in mind the multiple dimensions of the problem, it appears fundamental to promote actions that lead to enhancing the institutional framework for combating child labor. In this respect, the Ministries of Labor have a pivotal role to play, but there are many other bodies, both public and private, that should be resolutely involved in the momentum. The National Projects and Action Programs that have been able to establish solid partnerships with the different social actors involved in the issue have obtained the most significant results.
 11. The accumulated experience seems to suggest the desirability of promoting global childcare interventions, in which the issue of child labor is included in more general efforts to improve the situation of boys and girls in the areas of intervention.
 12. An important aspect of the interventions evaluated has been the participation of the parents, the teachers and, in general, the communities affected by the problem of child labor, in many of the actions undertaken. In this regard, it must be recognized that the awareness-raising actions have been crucial in promoting social mobilization processes that will ensure that the problem of child labor is not forgotten when execution has been completed.
 13. The interventions have promoted an increase in school attendance rates and an increase in the general quality of the education offered. These results seem to correspond significantly with the decrease in child labor rates, although we cannot state that there is a direct relationship between the two phenomena.
 14. However, the general information gathered by the Project allows us to assert that there has been an appreciable decline in the number of child workers in the areas of intervention, which shows, in general terms, the effectiveness of the strategy used.

15. Of the different efforts promoted to monitor the situation of child labor in the region, those that are clearly based on local installed capacity appear to be the most sustainable and adequate and they have tended to become early warning systems on the appearance of this phenomenon and of others that are plainly linked to it (ill-treatment, abuse, etc.).

C) Conclusions on relevance

16. The problem of child labor in agriculture in the subregion is more serious than had traditionally been assumed. Indeed, until relatively recently, this problem was hidden, minimized and, at times, its existence was even strongly denied. An important achievement of the general IPEC strategy has been to expose a reality to which little importance had been given. Therefore, we recognize that this initiative was extremely opportune: the intervention in the sector and the area was fully justified when the decision to intervene was taken.
17. While acknowledging this initial, clearly positive assessment, we have to add that the characterization of the problem (or, more exactly, the problems) of child labor in agriculture in the subregion has suffered from some degree of generalization. It has been linked to certain types of crops, whereas child labor in the sector is mainly characterized by a diversity of activities and by the seasonal or transient nature of the tasks. The differences between child labor in agriculture on family plots (whether these involve a specific crop or, as is common, different crops) and child labor in agriculture for third parties, usually on large farms, have proved to be more significant than the differences by country, region or crop. We therefore consider that the problem of child labor is related more closely to the type of exploitation where it occurs than to the crop or the geographical area where it occurs.
18. In addition to the inadequate definition of the problem, the proposed intervention strategy to resolve it has been essentially the same in all circumstances and has been structured according to the crop and geographical area and not according to the type of exploitation. This strategy has consisted in addressing a series of factors organized around four components (education, health, awareness-raising and alternative income generation), whose relationship to the proposed objective (the prevention and progressive elimination of child labor) is not always evident. Although this relationship appears to be significant in the awareness-raising and alternative income generation components, it is somewhat less evident in the case of education and poses serious doubts in the health component.
19. The selection of the zones of intervention within the countries does not display a homogeneous pattern. Although they were chosen in agreement with the authorities involved, we have been unable to find a series of criteria that explain the selection made.
20. The determination of the number of beneficiaries included in each project document has been fairly arbitrary, and in some cases rather unrealistic, and has caused serious problems in the general management of the intervention.
21. The involvement of the counterpart institutions (Ministries of Labor) appears to have been adequate. The local authorities have always expressed positive opinions on the Project although, on some occasions, there were complaints about the limited

visibility of the national authorities and about some shortcomings in communication. Nevertheless, in general, they are undoubtedly interested in and committed to the intervention.

22. This satisfactory assessment of the Project at the central levels contrasts at times with the minimal involvement of the regional delegations of the Ministries of Labor, because they have very limited resources available, which make it difficult for them to provide effective assistance to the Project. We have detected cases in which other governmental institutions, particularly the Ministries of Education, have been more decidedly involved in the implementation of the Project. The limited involvement of the Ministries of Agriculture is noteworthy, since the interventions take place in their sphere of responsibility.
23. In all the countries there are other public institutions with responsibilities in the area of childhood (childhood and adolescence institutes, offices of the first lady, child welfare institutes, etc.) that generally take part in the projects, endeavoring to combine efforts to tackle the problem.
24. Institution building does not appear to have been an important element of the Subregional Project. Indeed, an obvious shortcoming detected has been the limited development of crosscutting actions in the regional sphere. The components of a crosscutting nature have had little significance. Moreover, the relationship between the logic of the Subregional Project, the National Projects and the Action Programs is doubtful.
25. With regard to the producers in the sector concerned, we can say that there have been appreciable results and that, in many cases, very interesting processes have been generated. It has to be acknowledged that, at the outset, there was some distrust of the objectives of the intervention and that the effect generated has been very positive.
26. The participation of the parents, the teachers and, in general, the communities affected by the problem of child labor has been one of the most positive effects of the projects evaluated. Indeed, the evaluation team has noted that, on many occasions, significant social mobilization processes have been generated that constitute one of the most interesting experiences of the intervention. These processes have often been linked to schools and an increase in school attendance. Teachers have been a fundamental element in promoting and ensuring this mobilization.
27. The participation of the unions, and even other NGOs (in addition to those responsible for implementing the Action Programs), does not appear to have been very significant, except on isolated occasions.
28. It is extremely difficult to make an assessment of the social groups who have benefited from the project in relation to the target population included in the design. Information on the increase of the school population and on the reduction of absenteeism and failure seem to indicate that there is a relationship between the results obtained and those initially expected. Nonetheless, it should be recalled that an increase in school attendance and a decrease in repetition rates can be achieved without having much effect on the incidence of child labor in the areas of

intervention. Bearing in mind the usual school timetable (about four hours a day), and limitations in the measurement of the data, it is possible that there is a distortion between what has been achieved to date and what was initially expected in the case of situations that are clearly seasonal.

29. The projects have done excellent work by combining efforts with similar or related initiatives on the same issue undertaken by other development agencies. Obviously, the IPEC initiatives head thematic actions on child labor, concentrating information and combining efforts. We have not identified any kind of duplication of efforts or lack of coordination with other development agents. Most of those interviewed are aware of the source of the funds involved.

D) Conclusions on effectiveness

30. It is difficult to report on the achievement of the immediate objectives, because:

- The evaluation has not been made when execution has concluded. In many cases, the accumulated delays in the project preparation period and during execution itself will mean that projects will have to be extended by several months.
- Most of the data collected refers to the increase in school attendance and the decrease in school failure, situations that bear a relationship to the reduction of child labor but, strictly speaking, do not mean that child labor has been reduced.
- The actual data needs to be corroborated at significant moments – at harvest time when child labor is a significant reality – to assess the impact of the intervention.
- Many of the objectives were established in an aprioristic manner, without a realistic diagnosis of the initial situation of the problem. This means that the objectives of some projects are clearly unattainable, because they surpass the reality of the problem.

The conception of the projects established a group of beneficiaries identified by name, and an attempt is made to “measure” the impact of the intervention on them. Currently, many of the follow-up and monitoring efforts have focused on verifying the specific situation of all these persons and when they enter and exit employment. The difficulties of measuring all these situations and their limited significance create an added difficulty when determining the degree of effectiveness achieved.

31. Faced with a problem that includes a series of different situations, a single solution has been chosen, and this makes it difficult to attain the proposed objective. In addition to this initial shortcoming, the intervention logic itself suffers from some constraints concentrated in the health component (which has a limited relationship to the objective of eliminating child labor) and, to a lesser extent, in the education component. It should also be recalled that the component about which there is most consensus regarding its relationship with the objective of the projects: the alternative income generation, is the one that, in most cases, has been developed least.

32. The concept of the “prevention” of child labor has caused difficulties when measuring the contribution made by the different projects to its achievement. Indeed, the team is doubtful that it is possible to establish an objectively verifiable indicator that measures this objective directly. The solutions adopted (basically, including young children who are in school) appear inadequate, because linking this school attendance to the “prevention” of child labor is, at the very least, unreliable. It appears that, while the schooling costs of the child are relatively low and are assumed by the Project, linking prevention to school attendance could be an acceptable relationship, but it ceases to be so when the costs are not covered by the Project or when the child can contribute more income to the family unit than the costs he generates. The situation is further complicated when the seasonal and transient nature of the tasks performed are taken into account.

To assess the impact of the Project on the prevention of child labor, this concept must be defined at the outset and some kind of indicators should be established that allow the net effect achieved to be determined. Indirect indicators will probably have to be used and also assessment of awareness-raising and social mobilization. In any case, it appears that, at present, there is no clear indicator that establishes the effects or impact of the projects on the prevention of child labor in the areas of intervention.

33. We have detected some factors that could have a very significant impact on effectiveness. Basically, we refer to the crisis in coffee prices, which appears to have resulted in a drastic decline in activity in the sector. This phenomenon was not considered when the Project was formulated, but it is of fundamental importance when assessing the existing situation in the coffee sector in the region.

Although we have heard plausible arguments that the crisis in prices has put a greater pressure on child labor (owing to changes to more labor-intensive production models that focus less on the applications of inputs), the evaluation team tends to consider that the crisis has had the effect of reducing child labor, as it has reduced the demand for adult labor.

34. Awareness raising has been a key component of the interventions. However, the period of implementation of this component has been excessively short and has tended to be carried out in the initial stages of project implementation.
35. The increase in the commitment of the Governments to tackle the problem of child labor is another crucial achievement of these projects. Nevertheless, the resources devoted to institution building have been very limited, so that it is debatable whether this commitment will be expressed in effective measures tending to combat the problem when the project execution period has concluded.

E) Conclusions on efficiency

36. In general, efficiency, understood as the relationship between the resources made available to the intervention and the results achieved, may be considered adequate in most of the Action Programs. Nevertheless, at the level of the Subregional Project and the National Projects this assessment is almost impossible, because the results have not been quantified and do not coincide with those of the respective Action Programs.

37. The total contribution from IPEC to the Subregional Project (with USDOL resources) was slightly more than six million dollars. Of this total, the Action Programs Summary Outlines require contributions of 2.3 million dollars. According to this structure, the Action Programs involve about 38% of the total budget contributed by the donor agency, which seems rather low in view of the expected results. However, this assertion can be nuanced since local contributions are concentrated in the Action Programs.
38. Among the components included in the different Action Programs, those related to alternative income generation have tended to be less significant and their disbursement has met with more problems. This is a serious issue, because, as we have repeatedly mentioned, and as most of those interviewed at all levels of participation have stated, it is the component that has a more direct relationship with the specific objectives of the different projects. In general, we have observed a certain bias tending to favor the educational component to the detriment of the others.
39. We have identified a limited relationship between some of the activities implemented and the goals pursued. This is particularly significant in the case of activities in the health component and, to a lesser degree, in that of education. The results of the interventions on the prevention and elimination of child labor would probably have been very similar even if the activities linked to those aspects had not been executed; this could indicate a certain level of inefficiency that is easy to isolate and correct.
40. The creation and implementation of the child labor monitoring system has used resources that were not justified in relation to the results obtained. The changes in the scope and dimensions of this component have been very negative in terms of efficiency. It was only in the final stages of execution, when a more practical early warning system was chosen, which reduced the level of information required on the target population, that this disproportion began to be resolved.
41. A similar comment can be made about the baselines, whose utilization of resources (especially in time) appears to have been inconsistent with their usefulness. It seems that, only in the final stages, have they become more useful.
42. Important delays have been detected in the approval and implementation of the different Action Programs. There have been too many modifications of the timelines and the budgets. The causes of these delays and modifications are varied, but the main ones include the lack of definition in the IPEC structure, an excessive centralization of decision-making at certain times, policy changes in the executing and donor agencies, excessive information requirements, etc.
43. The management processes have not contributed to improving the general efficiency of the intervention. The limited decentralization of decision-making and the procedures put in place have delayed implementation of the initiatives. During the execution period these situations have tended to improve.
- The management structure presents some specific “bottlenecks”, where we have identified a concentration of tasks. The San José office appears to be the most evident case; it receives 10 reports on the same number of programs every four

months; these have to be examined and processed, and the corresponding reports prepared every three or four months. These tasks overload the personnel with work and prevent them from devoting themselves to other more relevant tasks.

- The formats in which the information is collected and managed should be simplified and, at least, unified, with longer time limits.
- Coordinating the implementing agencies consumes resources that could more efficiently be devoted to tasks more closely related to implementation of the programmed activities.
- There appears to be some contradiction between the territorial logic that IPEC has maintained for the series of interventions and the sectoral logic on which the Subregional Project is based. This contradiction between the two logics leads to a certain lack of definition of the functions of the project coordinators and the IPEC national coordinators, which does not help promote efficient management processes.

F) Conclusions on the impact

44. In general, the positive effects identified are much more important than the negative ones. In particular, we should highlight:

- The increase in the school attendance rates, with a general improvement in the quality of education; this can be measured both in the information on the decrease in school failure, and in the increase in attendance and the reduction in the dropout rate. Evidently, these results go beyond the target population itself, which means that they should be considered indirect effects.
- The depiction of the problem of child labor appears to have significantly raised awareness (social and institutional) and this has helped generate a process of integral childhood protection, which goes far beyond the objectives of the Project.
- Other positive effects linked to social mobilization are inter-institutional coordination, with more ambitious purposes than merely identifying the problem in question, and an increase in the capacity of most of the institutions involved.
- It is difficult to report on the effects that the projects have had on gender issues but, in general, the evaluation team has been able to observe that in most of the watch group committees (or other similar organizations established for detecting and reporting on the problem), women play an essential role and that they have been able to occupy decision-making roles which, prior to the project, were closed to them.

45. The unforeseen negative effects are even more difficult to define and are merely guesses that would need to be confirmed using a more precise analysis.

- It appears that there may have been some distortion in the educational systems in some areas. This could have occurred because the effect of the projects in determined communities and/or schools has meant that the limited public

resources available are concentrated in those areas, neglecting others which are relatively similar.

- There appear to have been cases in which the capacity of absorption of the schools has been filled to the limit, and this could result in a decline in the quality of the education offered in the future.
 - It is also possible that situations are being generated in which the institutions involved have increased their operating costs beyond their possibilities.
 - But the most serious effect could be the “expulsion” effect that some projects appear to have caused. As a result of the awareness-raising work and the pressures exerted on the producers, the latter have decided to limit drastically the number of child workers on their exploitations. This has meant that the children have moved into other types of child labor, at times more hazardous and detrimental. Withdrawing children from one kind of work without generating a different socio-economic climate could have very negative effects.
46. In general, the effects on the adolescent population appear to have been much less significant. We believe that it has been much more difficult to have an impact on a population that is already on the threshold of its definitive insertion into the workforce, than on younger children. This will probably be one of the challenges for new projects.
47. Little can be said about the aspects that are of particular interest to ILO, such as international labor standards, equality between men and women (the consequences of child labor in the agricultural sector cause much more concern in the case of girl children, whose schooling, as they grow older, is much more complicated), and environmental protection. We can report favorably on the first point, but cannot comment specifically on the other two, although we have not observed negative effects. The action strategy for particularly hazardous work is currently being studied.

G) Conclusions on sustainability

48. The sustainability of the effects caused by the intervention is generally rather uncertain. This is because the activities that appear to have made the most significant contribution to the achievement of the proposed objectives are basically of a welfare nature, whose continuity over time cannot be guaranteed, if there are no changes in the financial situation of the local institutions and/or the financial situation of the families involved:
- The success of the interventions has focused on the permanent schooling of the younger children (schooling those who were not attending, and decreasing absenteeism and the repetition rate among those who were attending) – and, of course, on the significant impact that awareness raising and social mobilization have on the problem. This has been achieved, fundamentally, by subsidizing schooling costs (scholarships, school meals, uniforms, training materials). The local authorities’ difficulty to continue these subsidies is a risk for the sustainability of the results achieved.

- The limited work carried out in the alternative income generation component to date contributes to decreasing the intervention's possibilities of achieving sustainability. If the increase in the available family income is due, above all, to a decrease in costs and not to an increase in earnings, and if this decrease in costs (mostly via subsidies) cannot be maintained, the situation will tend to return to the point of departure once the available resources are exhausted.
49. The monitoring system that was supposed to be implemented at the start of execution has proved inadequate for local capacities and resources and, consequently, will be difficult to sustain. The new monitoring systems that were being developed during the final stage of the projects have better perspectives of sustainability, although there is very little time available for implementing them.
50. Institution building has not been developed sufficiently to guarantee the sustainability of the systems implemented by the project. Despite the interest shown by the central authorities in all the countries, the local institutions (decentralized) often do not have either the resources or the capacity essential for continuing the work that has been done on their own.
51. To date, dissemination of lessons learned and good practice has been very limited. The crosscutting components of the Action Programs of the Subregional Project have had little importance so far. This is another major challenge for the future of the projects in the sector.

H) Recommendations

52. Redefine the Subregional Project on child labor in the sector, taking into account the crosscutting and subregional aspects that go beyond direct actions.
- To this end, it is important to enhance the exchange of experiences and the generation of synergies between the different interventions, taking into account the characteristics of each Government and each area.
 - The program should also include activities designed specifically to strengthen general policies on the elimination of child labor in the area.
53. Establish a framework of criteria and priorities that facilitates and justifies the selection of areas of intervention and target populations. Those criteria should be validated in the most participatory way possible with the institutions and organizations involved in their implementation.
54. Identify the fundamental problems, based on a diagnosis of the situation that is as participatory as possible, based on exploitation models and specific situations of child labor, irrespective of the crops. Intervention strategies adapted to each specific case can be based on this diagnosis.
55. It is necessary to define a simpler model for analyzing the existing conditions than the one that is being developed, in which the diagnostic component substitutes the survey component. However, this does not mean that the objectives should not be quantified once the intervention has been designed. The diagnosis should be related

to the agents responsible for managing the intervention and be of a participatory nature.

56. Prepare participatory designs based on the diagnoses that have been made, and establishing “optimums” that, subsequently, must be put in practice until an intervention with realistic objectives has been defined.
57. Study other possible planning structures that simplify the elements of the intervention logic. A Subregional Project for the whole the sector (irrespective of the crop where the problem is identified) could be considered, together with a series of territorial Action Programs complemented by actions that crosscut those programs (which should be given greater relevance).
58. Draft a directive on the characteristics of the implementing agencies and on their responsibilities by component and/or project. Define criteria for their selection and incentives for their participation. The possibility of direct execution by IPEC, execution by public entities, and subcontracting by bid to private organizations should be considered
59. Support efforts to design and implement systems to monitor child labor, based on local capacities and resources, which should not be confused with project follow-up systems. These monitoring systems cannot provide continuous and permanent information on the situation of the target populations. It seems more logical to move towards warning and response systems, with less precise but more operational data. These systems have a high correlation to the organization and mobilization efforts undertaken.
60. Define clearly the functions and responsibilities of the different national agents involved in day-to-day project management.
 - Involve the direct counterpart from the outset and reinforce its leadership with regard to the other institutions.
 - Establish coordination committees to encourage the participation of all the public actors. It is important to negotiate, from the start, what each institution can contribute to implementation and to future sustainability.
 - Establish standardized procedures that facilitate providing the Ministries of Labor with information on the progress of the projects.
61. Pay special attention to establishing flexible and standardized procedures in the work plans. Decentralization processes should receive greater support, by giving greater responsibilities to the project coordinators and the national coordinators. The project coordinator’s authority should be enhanced with regard to the implementing agencies. The technical assistance role of the program officials and the principal technical advisers should be strengthened
62. Reduce information requirements to the essential aspects of the projects; modify the periods for controlling the information so as not to duplicate efforts by the parties, and simplify formulas and standardize documents. Follow-up reports should be prepared and presented by project and not by component.

63. Once the intervention logic for the projects has been established, we recommend that the work plan should be completed with a programming by components and their activities, including estimates of time, budget, and assignment of responsibilities for each activity.
64. The awareness-raising process implemented has produced an interesting experience that should be systematized; however, some activities that are related much more to visibility and publicity than to awareness raising and social mobilization should be excluded from the component. The time allocated for execution of this component should be extended.
65. Reconsider the desirability of retaining the health component. Should the decision be affirmative, it seems more logical to focus on the activities of this component that are more directly linked to the elimination of child labor.
66. Reconsider also the desirability of maintaining the education component. Should the decision be affirmative, it seems more logical to focus on the activities of this component that are more directly linked to the elimination of child labor. It is important to assign greater responsibilities to the central and local education authorities in this component and also to strengthen the actions aimed at groups of adolescents.
67. Reconsider retaining the activities related to income generation, the sustainability of the effects achieved, and their possible inclusion in the component to improve family income by:
- Increasing the overall importance of the component and commencing its execution almost from the start of the Action Programs.
 - Including both improving family incomes and generating alternative income activities.
 - Including intervention strategies that go beyond granting micro-credits. Specifically, activities to promote employment and to improve vocational training would appear to be very suitable, and this is being analyzed in the context of several interventions.
 - Taking advantage of the experience accumulated in this area by IPEC and its experts, and by ILO in general.
68. Improve the logic and coherence of project design, paying more attention to the relationship between the results and the objective as well as to external factors, and establishing an operative system to measure the specific objective. Extend the project execution period, making the process of identification and design more flexible and improving decision-making procedures.
69. For future project designs, the positive effects should be more directly linked to the target populations and not to the general population. The negative effects should be evaluated with greater attention on future occasions.

70. More attention should be paid to all the elements of special importance to ILO when future projects are conceived and designed. Efforts to analyze the particular danger that participation in this sector represents for child workers should continue.
71. With regard to activities of a welfare nature, transfer mechanisms should be identified, as of the design stage, and also institutions willing to assume operating and maintenance costs.
72. To enhance the possibilities of sustainability, prior to execution, it is essential to establish some realistic conditions that guarantee a certain commitment by the public institutions, to decrease the welfare nature of the intervention and strengthen components relating to investment and promotion of income and employment, and to recognize the need for longer implementation periods.

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VOLUME I

EVALUATION REPORT

August 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	3
2.1. The intervention logic.....	4
2.2. Scope of the evaluation.....	12
2.3. Methodological approach of the evaluation	13
2.4. Limitations and possibilities of the proposed approach	14
3. CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE DESIGN.....	15
3.1. Definition of the problem and origin of the projects	15
3.2. National Projects and project documents.....	17
3.3. Baselines, Action Program planning and other studies	20
4. MONITORING SYSTEM AND FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATION DESIGN	22
5. MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF THE INTERVENTIONS.....	26
5.1. Organizational structure and procedures	27
5.2 Implementation mechanisms	30
5.3. Time limits, timing, use of resources.....	34
5.4. Information management	34
6. RESULTS AND EFFECTS OF THE INTERVENTIONS.....	35
6.1. Relevance and causality	37
6.2. Effectiveness.....	41
6.3. Efficiency and alternative strategies	43
6.4. Effects and sustainability	46
7. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	48

1. Introduction

In accordance with the terms of reference, this evaluation tries to respond to the concern of the International Labour Office (ILO) and, more specifically, of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), to determine the results and effects of the initiatives designed to prevent and progressively eliminate child labor in the coffee sector in five Central American countries and the Dominican Republic.

Consequently, it is the evaluation of a program (in this case a subregional program), based on a series of interventions that have either concluded recently or are in their final stages, in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.

The evaluation methodology and procedures endeavor to follow the requirements established by ILO. The methodology and procedures can be found in several of the Organization's documents, particularly in the one entitled "Guidelines for the Preparation of Independent Evaluations of ILO Programmes and Projects," of November 1997.

The evaluation report is composed of three main parts:

- The first, in Chapter 2, is merely descriptive. It depicts the general panorama of the interventions that IPEC is carrying out in the region and explains the activities that are the subject of this document, while defining the methodology used for the evaluation.
- A evaluative part follows in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, which analyzes the planning of the program that is being evaluated, as well as the performance and the results of the activities undertaken, and comments on how the issues that are of special concern to ILO are dealt with.
- Lastly, Chapter 7 sets out the conclusions reached by the evaluation and makes proposals to improve the program, without losing sight of its goal, which is the elimination of child labor.

This exercise was conducted between the end of June and the beginning of August 2003, while the mission in Central America and the Dominican Republic was carried out during most of June and the beginning of July 2003.

The evaluation team would like to express its appreciation for the collaboration of all the IPEC personnel, without whose support it would not have been possible to carry out the work and, in particular, for that of the experts responsible for the Project, both in the Regional Sub-delegation and in the different countries where the evaluation was carried out.

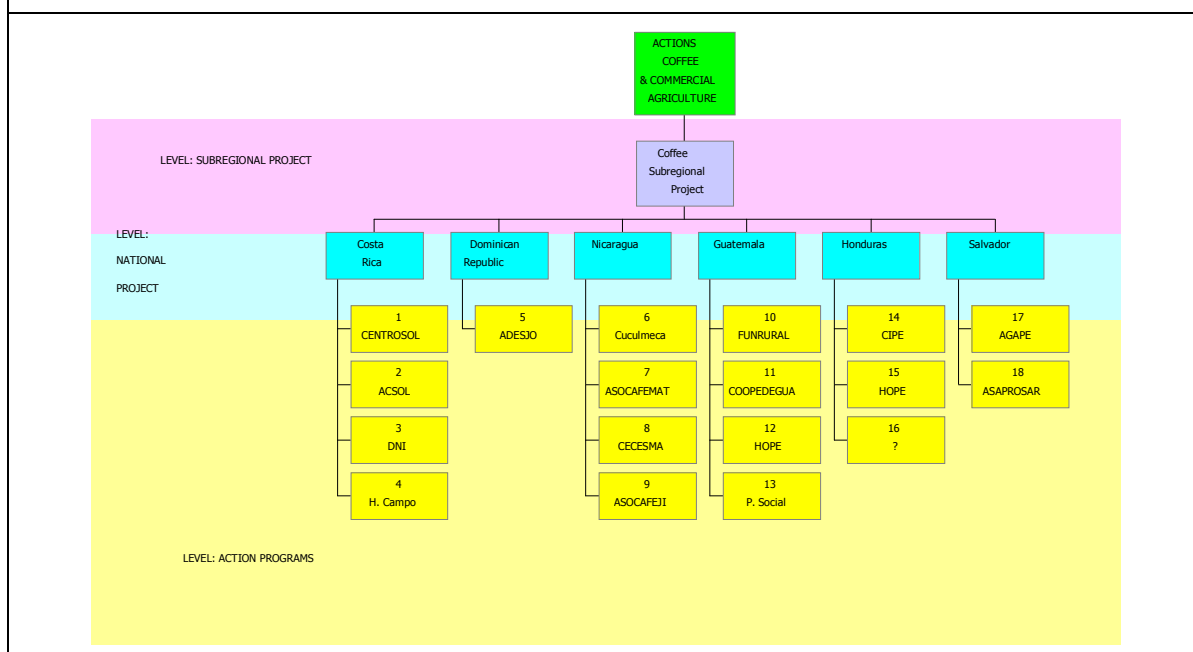
It also acknowledges the patience and courtesy of the personnel of the implementing agencies for the different projects, and of all those persons who accompanied the evaluation team and supported their "interrogations", who are the eventual recipients of all the valuable or groundless elements that may be extracted from this report.

2. General description of the evaluation methodology

This chapter is divided into two thematic blocs and four sections. The first bloc, which appears in the first section, attempts to describe the initiative examined in this evaluation document. Accordingly, all the activities implemented in the coffee sector in Central America and the Dominican Republic are presented systematically, differentiating the Subregional Project, its six National Projects and their eighteen Action Programs.

First, there is a brief description of the Subregional Project and then the country projects are described, with comments on each one.

Table 1: Structure of the projects and programs



Even though this thematic bloc includes some information derived from the evaluation, we have tried to be merely descriptive, avoiding assessments, as these will be made in the following chapters.

The remaining three sections focus on describing the methodology, procedures and tools used for the evaluation, so that, together with the preceding section (describing the initiatives), they comprise the descriptive part of the document.

These sections begin by commenting on the scope of the evaluation, as proposed in the terms of reference and in subsequent conversations with those responsible for financing and managing the initiatives. Then, the methodological approach proposed for the evaluation is reviewed, describing how it has been executed.

Lastly, some of the main constraints of this approach are explained, and also its possibilities.

2.1. The intervention logic

This is a Subregional Project in five Central American countries and the Dominican Republic. The Project is described in a formulation document entitled “Combating Child Labor in the Coffee Industry of Central America and the Dominican Republic”

The structure of the Subregional Project proposes a period of 41 months for activities in six countries (Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador), with a budget administered by IPEC (from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL)) of US\$1,169,503 and a projected starting date of November 1999.

The project documents (PRODOC), which set out initiatives for a total of US\$4,942,686, have similar goals and propose the same intervention structure as the Subregional Project, consisting in an objective (“to prevent and progressively eliminate child labor in the coffee sector”), and four results, which may be summarized as follows:

1. To provide families with viable alternatives, through a package of social protection measures.
 - ✓ Among these viable alternatives, the activities include: training parents in income-generating alternatives, and providing funds for micro-enterprises, and technical assistance to families to increase productivity.
 - ✓ The “package of social protection measures” is complemented by measures to facilitate access to health and education.
2. To mobilize and raise-awareness among the population and to work with other actors (whose capacities the project also seeks to enhance) in order to prevent child labor.
3. To design and implement a child labor monitoring system.
4. To promote the sharing of experiences on the issue at the national and regional levels.

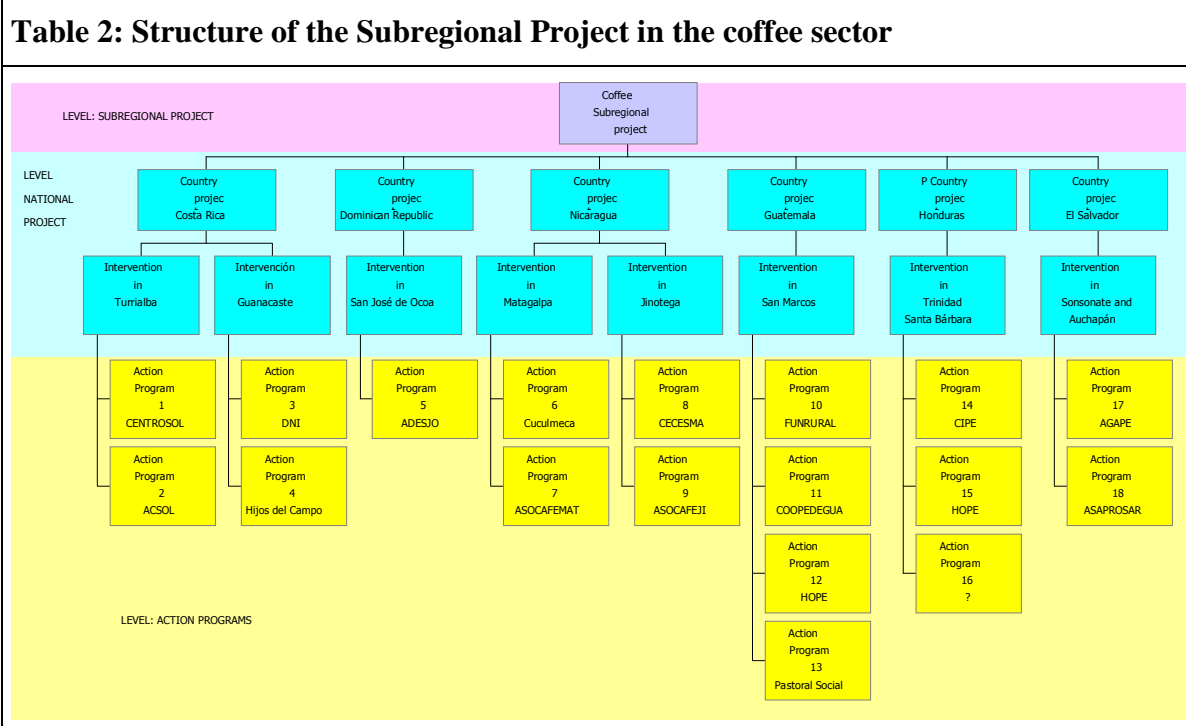
Some of the measures arising from this intervention structure are intended to be implemented directly by IPEC and others (those related to social protection measures, mobilization and awareness-raising), with the collaboration of the “implementing agencies.”

The participation of implementing agencies gives rise to the “Action Programs” – specific development initiatives. Thus, there are three instrumental levels of action, structured in general to specific planning levels:

- A Subregional Project
- Six National Projects
- Eighteen Action Programs.

The Subregional Project in the coffee sector is composed of six National Projects (one for each country of intervention) and eighteen Action Programs. The National Projects in Costa Rica and Nicaragua also include a territorial sub-division (the areas of Turrialba and Puntarenas/Guanacaste in Costa Rica, and Jinotega and Matagalpa in Nicaragua), while the other four National Projects appear to have a single territorial area of intervention; however, in the case of El Salvador, this area includes communities in two Departments.

The following table is intended to reflect the structure described at the level of the Subregional Project in the coffee sector:



All the National Projects have a common logic model and, for the most part, this is transferred to their Action Programs. This model proposes working with four sub-programs: (i) creation of a baseline, project planning, and conducting other necessary studies; (ii) social protection measures for child and adolescent workers and their families (including education, health, nutrition and generation of alternative sources of income); (iii) awareness-raising, social mobilization and institution-building, and (iv) a system for monitoring and preventing child labor.

It can be seen that there is very little difference between the logic model of the Subregional Project and that of its four National Projects, because the final result of the Subregional Project is absorbed in the logic model of the National Projects (probably because it is considered an activity that crosscuts the higher ranking initiative), being substituted by an initial result of the National Projects, which consists in the elaboration of baselines, the planning of actions and studies prior to implementation.

The intervention model for the first and the fourth sub-programs (baselines and monitoring of child labor) of the National Projects would be undertaken by university institutions, the IPEC team and other actors, and for the second and third sub-programs

(social protection measures, and awareness-raising and social mobilization) by the implementing agencies.

The second and third sub-programs would be implemented by planning the so-called Action Programs, establishing one for each implementing agency.

a) Coffee in Costa Rica

The National Coffee Project in Costa Rica is implemented in two different geographical areas, one in Turrialba and another in areas of the provinces of Guanacaste and Puntarenas. Two Action Programs were proposed in each area of intervention; this entails a total of four implementing agencies, structured as follows:

No.	Area	Action Program	Implementing agency
1	Turrialba	Education and awareness raising	CENTROSOL
2	Turrialba	Alternative income generation	ACSOL
3	Guanacaste / Puntarenas	Education and awareness raising	DNI
4	Guanacaste / Puntarenas	Alternative income generation	Hijos del Campo

Implementation of the Costa Rican National Project was scheduled to begin in November 1999, with a duration of 48 months. The total budget in the document establishes an IPEC contribution (from USDOL funds) of just over \$880,000.

In Turrialba, the education and awareness raising Action Programs were scheduled to begin in April 2001 (eight months after the baseline had been completed), and the alternative income generation Action Programs in August 2001. It was estimated that each component would have a duration of 15 months; however, at the date of the visit execution continued. The IPEC contribution to both initiatives was estimated at about \$235,000, which would be focused on working with 1,300 children and adolescents and 590 families. Finally, the Programs covered 89 families, and there were difficulties in finding 1,300 child workers in the coffee sector in this area.

In Guanacaste-Puntarenas, the education and awareness raising component was scheduled to begin in July 2001 and the alternative income generation component in July 2002, with an initial duration of 14 months in the case of education and awareness raising.

Both the budget and the time had to be increased for the two components and about \$200,000 was available for implementation; the alternative income generation component is still being executed and there is some doubt about how this component should be approached. Actions were initially aimed at 1,000 children and adolescents and about 100 families of producers.

The baseline was prepared from June to September 2000, which delayed the whole project, and the monitoring sub-program is still continuing. The following specific activities were carried out in the context of the Action Programs:

GUANACASTE - PUNTARENAS	TURRIALBA
Baseline Extracurricular support Raising awareness about rights Local network of support institutions Scholarships Secondary support - TV Raising the awareness of parents Awareness-raising events Open education Remedial schooling Workshops for employers Posters and publicity material	Baseline Teacher training School supplies Extracurricular support Raising awareness about rights Local network of support institutions Scholarships Raising the awareness of parents School supplies Awareness-raising events School vegetable gardens Complements to teachers Open education Sports teams Organization of sports events Dental care Psychological care Workshops on domestic violence Training in methods of child education Remedial schooling Watch group committees Radio announcements Videos Communicators' network Workshops for employers Posters and publicity material Self-confidence building courses Opportunities for art and cultural activities Revolving funds Business management training Marketing studies

Although, work was done with some large-scale operations in the case of Turrialba, most of the families targeted by the actions were small producers, and this production model predominates in Costa Rica. Therefore, most of the children and adolescents involved worked on family exploitations.

b) Coffee in the Dominican Republic

The coffee National Project in the Dominican Republic is implemented in San José de Ocoa. The structure of the document is similar to the previous one, although, in this case, only one Action Program is proposed as there is a single implementing agency:

No.	Area	Action Program	Implementing agency
1	San José de Ocoa	Education, health, awareness raising and alternative income generation	ADESJO

The coffee National Project in the Dominican Republic was scheduled to begin in November 1999, with a duration of 44 months. The total budget in the document establishes an IPEC contribution of slightly more than \$635,000.

The Action Program was scheduled to begin in July 2001, with an initial duration of 15 months, and this was subsequently extended to 29 months. At the date of the visit, implementation continued.

It was planned that the IPEC contribution would be used for working with 2,000 children and adolescents and 1,082 families.

The baseline was prepared from June to September 2000, almost one year before the preparation of the Action Program, while the monitoring system is still underway.

The following are the main activities carried out in the context of this project:

Baseline	Remedial schooling
Teacher training	Watch group committees
School packages	Anthropometric studies
Extracurricular support	Radio announcements
Raising awareness about rights	Videos
Local network of support institutions	Communicators' network
Vocational training	Workshops for employers
Raising the awareness of parents	Posters and publicity material
School supplies	Adult literacy
Awareness-raising events	Summer camps
Complements to teachers	Revolving funds
Children's registry office	Business management training
Dental care	Marketing studies
Micronutrients	

Coffee exploitations in the area of intervention in the Dominican Republic are mainly small-scale, and children who work on family exploitations predominate.

c) Coffee in Nicaragua

The coffee National Project in Nicaragua is concentrated in areas of the department of Matagalpa and Jinotega. The Action Programs proposed in this case are as follows:

No.	Area	Action Program	Implementing agency
1	Matagalpa	Education, awareness raising and health	CECESMA
2	Matagalpa	Alternative income generation	ASOCAFEMAT
3	Jinotega	Education, awareness raising and health	La Cuculmeca
4	Jinotega	Alternative income generation	ASOCAFEJI

Implementation of the coffee National Project in Nicaragua was scheduled to begin in November 1999 with a duration of 44 months. The total budget that appears in the document establishes an IPEC contribution of slightly more than \$1,100,000.

The Action Programs were scheduled to start in April 2001, with an initial duration of 15 months, which was subsequently extended, so that, at the date of the visit, execution continued. It was decided that the IPEC contribution should be used to work with almost 4,000 children and adolescents.

The baseline was prepared from December 2000 to February 2001, while the monitoring system is still being implemented.

The main activities in the context of this project have been as follows:

Baseline	Psychological care
Teacher training	Workshops on domestic violence
School packages	Gender perspective training
Raising awareness about rights	Training on child education methodologies
Vocational training	Remedial schooling
Presential secondary support	Watch group committees
Raising the awareness of parents	Radio announcements
School supplies	Videos
Awareness-raising events	Communicators' networks
Support for school diningrooms	Workshops for employers
School vegetable gardens	Posters and publicity material
Complements to teachers	Self-confidence building courses
Enrolment fees	Adult literacy
Children's registry office	Opportunities for art and cultural activities
Sports teams	Revolving funds
Organization of sports events	Business management training
Vaccination and deparasitization	Preventive health workshops

Contrary to the preceding cases (Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic), coffee exploitations are mainly large-scale, with a predominance of children working for third parties.

d) Coffee in Guatemala

The coffee National Project in Guatemala is being implemented in the department of San Marcos with the following Action Programs:

No.	Area	Action Program	Implementing agency
1	San Marcos – Guatemala	Education	FUNRURAL
2	San Marcos – Guatemala	Health	HOPE
3	San Marcos – Guatemala	Awareness raising	Coopedegua
4	San Marcos - Guatemala	Alternative income generation	Pastoral Social

Implementation of the coffee National Project in Guatemala was scheduled to begin in November 1999, with a duration of 44 months. The total budget that appears in the document establishes an IPEC contribution of slightly less than \$1,200,000.

The Action Programs were scheduled to begin in January 2001, but did not start until the end of May 2001. The duration was initially estimated to be 18 months, but this was subsequently extended by a further 18 months. At the date of the visit, implementation continued.

The IPEC contribution to these programs of \$600,000 has been used to work with 4,000 children and 1,500 families.

The baseline was presented in October 2000, and the monitoring system continues. The main activities carried out in the context of this project have been as follow:

Baseline	Medicine for health centers
Teacher training	Vaccination and deparasitization
School packages	Gender perspective training
Raising awareness about rights	Training in methods of child education
Scholarships	School libraries
Vocational training	Anthropometric studies
Secondary support in the classroom	Radio announcements
Secondary support - TV	Communicators' networks
Raising the awareness of parents	Posters and publicity material
School supplies	Self-confidence building courses
School vegetable gardens	Summer camps
Complements to teachers	Revolving funds
Sports teams	Business management training
Organization of sports events	Health diagnoses for mothers
Midwife training	Health research/studies of focal groups
AIDS prevention	

Most coffee exploitations are large-scale, with a predominance of children who work for third parties on these farms, where they even emigrate temporarily.

e) Coffee in Honduras

The coffee National Project in Honduras is implemented in the municipality of La Trinidad, department of Santa Bárbara, with the following Action Programs:

No.	Area	Action Program	Implementing agency
1	La Trinidad – Santa Bárbara	Education and awareness raising	CIPE Consultants
2	La Trinidad – Santa Bárbara	Health	HOPE
3	La Trinidad – Santa Bárbara	Alternative income generation	?

The coffee National Project in Honduras was scheduled to begin in November 1999, with a duration of 48 months. The total budget that appears in the document establishes an IPEC contribution of slightly more than \$440,000.

Implementation of the Action Programs was scheduled for July 2002, and an initial duration of 17.5 months was estimated. Execution continued at the date of the visit.

It was decided to use the IPEC contribution to these programs of approximately \$125,000 to work with 1,650 children and adolescents and 250 families.

The baseline was presented in October 2000 (almost two years before implementation of the programs), while the monitoring system is still being executed. In this Project, the alternative income generation component has not yet been implemented.

The activities carried out in the context of this Project have been as follows:

Baseline	Vaccination and deparasitization
Teacher training	Psychological care
School packages	Training in methods of child education
Raising awareness about rights	Remedial schooling
Local network of support institutions	School libraries
Vocational training	Watch group committees
Secondary support in the classroom	Anthropometric studies
Raising the awareness of parents	Radio announcements
School supplies	Videos
School vegetable gardens	Workshops for employers
Organization of sports events	Posters and publicity material
Dental care	Self-confidence building courses
First-aid manual	Adult literacy
School first-aid kits	Opportunities for art and cultural activities
Medicine for health centers	Revolving funds
	Health research/studies of focal groups

Most coffee exploitations in the area of intervention in Honduras are small-scale, with a predominance of children who work on their family plots.

f) Coffee in El Salvador

Lastly, the coffee National Project in El Salvador has been implemented in the municipalities of Concepción de Ataco and Juayúa, in the departments of Ahuachapán and Sonsonate respectively, with the following Action Programs:

No.	Area	Action Program	Implementing agency
1	Concepción de Ataco and Juayúa	Education, health, awareness raising	ÁGAPE
2	Concepción de Ataco and Juayúa	Alternative income generation	ASAPROSAR

Implementation of the coffee National Project in Salvador was scheduled to start in November 1999, with a duration of 41 months. The total budget that appears in the document establishes an IPEC contribution of slightly less than \$700,000.

Implementation of the Action Programs was scheduled to start in November 2001 (although the alternative income generation component did not begin until July 2002), with an initial duration of 18 months. At the date of the visit, execution continued.

The IPEC contribution to these programs, of approximately \$350,000, was devoted to working with a target population of 2,800 children and adolescents and 330 families.

The baseline was presented in October 2000 (almost two years before implementation of the programs), while the monitoring system continues. The following activities have been carried out.

Baseline Teacher training School packages Extracurricular support Awareness raising about rights Local network of support institutions Vocational training Secondary support in the classroom Raising the awareness of parents School supplies Awareness-raising events School vegetable gardens Complements to teachers Open education Enrolment fees Sports teams Organization of sports events Workshops on seeking employment Dental care AIDS prevention School first-aid kits Medicines for health centers Vaccination and deparasitization	Psychological care Workshops on domestic violence Gender perspective training Micronutrients Training in methods of child education Remedial schooling Watch group committees Radio announcements Videos Communicators' networks Workshops for employers Posters and publicity material Self-confidence building courses Adult literacy Revolving funds Business management training Tourist development plans Marketing studies Health research/studies of focal groups
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Most coffee exploitations in these areas of El Salvador are small-scale, with a predominance of children who work on family plots.

2.2. Scope of the evaluation

The terms of reference of the evaluation suggested that a final assessment of the Subregional Project should be made, based on the examination of this project, the National Projects and their Action Programs.

The purpose was to provide an independent, analytical perspective of the project's ability to achieve its results and objectives, taking into consideration, in particular, the project's coverage of the target population and its impact on that population in terms of reducing child labor.

Therefore, this is the final evaluation of the results of a project, which, owing to its conception, appears to be more a program in a geographical area, composed of an intervention on a concrete issue: child labor, in a specific, previously established sector: agriculture.

In addition, the project calls for an intervention strategy that is replicated at its different levels of intervention (National Projects and Action Programs), so that it incorporates a specific instrument for the progressive elimination of child labor. Consequently, in the terms of reference, one of the purposes of the project is to "analyze the strategies used by IPEC for eliminating child labor in this specific sector."

Hence, it appears that this is an evaluation of the program, the geographical location, the issue and/or the tools used. Accordingly, after the first meetings with those responsible, it was decided to consider all these possible approaches or aspects, but giving priority to the evaluation of "the program" and "the tools."

The nature of a “program evaluation” leads us to consider that examining the possible effects on levels of development in the geographical area, or analyzing the coverage of the specific issue or the sectoral impacts on agriculture, is less important than considering the Project as a “pilot intervention” and a “model strategy” for the prevention and progressive elimination of child labor in the sector and in the geographical area of the activities.

In this respect, the terms of reference proposed an evaluation that would consider questions relating to the validity of the design, the relevance of the objectives, the quality of management, the efficiency, the effectiveness, the sustainability and the unanticipated effects; all essential elements for the final assessment of the expected effects and results of a pilot intervention that proposes a possible model strategy.

Likewise, it was suggested that aspects relating to project execution and performance, the effects produced, the perspectives of sustainability, an analysis of management, including the monitoring and evaluation system used, should be included. The fact that there had already been a mid-term evaluation that emphasized aspects related to performance, suggested that this phase of the work should focus less on management, which had been sufficiently evaluated, with recommendations adopted, and more on the proposed monitoring models.

2.3. Methodological approach of the evaluation

To take into account the requirements set out in the preceding section, an evaluation plan was established that included methodological and procedural elements and tools.

It was proposed that the evaluation strategy should not be experimental, but rely on the existing temporal series relating to specific indicators at the levels of results and objectives. The requirements of program and tool evaluation suggested focusing on an analysis of the design based on the application of the logical framework approach. To assess performance, we considered that information from different sources should be verified; while, to detect results and effects, we turned to the support offered by the logical framework, particularly the indicators and external factors columns.

Conventional techniques were used to collect data: surveys, interviews, discussion groups, observation, direct measurement, analysis of documents, etc. Data analysis was focused, above all, on comparing indicators and other basic techniques.

The procedure established for the evaluation was structured in the three usual stages for this type of work, including:

- ✓ Desk review of the documentation;
- ✓ Fieldwork, including the subregional office, the local offices, counterparts and authorities and, to a lesser extent, the beneficiaries and other stakeholders;
- ✓ Deskwork to draft the final report.

In this process, considerable importance was accorded to the organization of a workshop for those involved, with the participation of those in charge of the Subregional Project, the National Projects, the donor agency, those responsible for

activities at headquarters in Geneva and the principal counterparts. Some preliminary conclusions and recommendations were broached during the workshop, in order to discuss these points, gather information and reach agreement on certain matters.

Among the tools used were model intervention records used to systematize information and simple questionnaires to apply to random samples of beneficiaries and stakeholders (examples are included in Appendix VI). To this end, the population was divided into a series of groups, with a first group of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, a second of children, parents and employers, and a third of those who had participated successfully and those who had participated unsuccessfully.

The evaluation team was composed of a team leader, engaged in Europe, and four local evaluators, one for each country of intervention. A brief curriculum vitae of each national evaluator is included in Appendix VI.

The terms of reference of the evaluation for the international and local consultants are also attached.

2.4. Limitations and possibilities of the proposed approach

The approach adopted has proved useful for analyzing the Subregional Project; however:

- ✓ Analyses based on the logical framework approach are strongly affected by the quality of the documentation and design used.

In general, the indicators at the level of plans and programs (in this case, the Subregional Project and the National Projects) were inadequately formulated; this limits the scope of the assessment and means that they have to be reformulated. However, in an intervention as complex as the one we are examining, we consider it has proved to be an adequate tool.

- ✓ The final evaluation was not final, because most of the specific interventions were still being implemented and some had not even been initiated when the fieldwork was carried out. Obviously, this made it difficult to analyze the results and assess future effects.
- ✓ The excessive documentation consulted has prevented an in-depth analysis of the less important reports of the intervention cycle. The evaluation team had to read more than sixty documents, including the Subregional Project, six National Projects, more than six baselines, almost twenty Action Programs, more than twenty progress reports, more than ten work plans, etc.
- ✓ Although the documentation was appropriate and relatively clear, it suggests that the numerous “reformulations” have led to a loss of information. In any case, it was repetitive and the structure was inadequate (as we shall comment below). This problem is replicated in the documents at the different planning levels (Subregional Project, National Projects and Action Programs).
- ✓ The tools have been useful (particularly, after they had been restructured following the comments of those responsible for methodology in the IPEC offices), but

coordination of the local evaluators proved complicated, owing to errors by the team leaders, which has meant that responses to similar questionnaires have been received in different formats.

- ✓ The time allocated to the evaluation was extremely limited, particularly with regard to the fieldwork; this has prevented us from making a thorough examination of some matters of interest. Nevertheless, we should also note that the similarity of the intervention strategy at all planning levels and in all the countries helped us to continue refining the questions and the script for the interviews.
- ✓ As usually happens in program and instrument evaluations, some of those involved may have wanted more information on specific interventions. However, it is not possible to analyze individual actions in an evaluation of this kind.

3. Conclusions about the design

As a result of making a program and tool evaluation, based on a “pilot intervention” with a “model strategy” for the prevention and progressive elimination of child labor, the evaluation team has devoted considerable attention to the process of the identification and design of the Subregional Project for the progressive elimination of child labor in the coffee sector.

The design stage had different levels that should be dealt with separately:

- i. The formulation of the Subregional Project, based on the identification of specific problems that justify the relevance of elaborating intervention initiatives in the coffee sector, occupies the upper level.
- ii. The Subregional Project is subsequently implemented through a series of National Projects that, for the most part, replicate the subregional model as regards intervention strategy and management models.
- iii. In turn, these National Projects make it possible to carry out the baseline studies, formulation of the so-called Action Program Summary Outlines, and other supplementary studies.
- iv. Lastly, some additional elements crosscut all the interventions included in the strategies.

It is this sequence, its origin, coherence, and validity in the identification of problems and intervention logic, which we will try and describe in the following subparagraphs, which present the principal findings of the analysis.

3.1. Definition of the problem and origin of the projects

The justification for intervening on the issue of child labor in the geographical area of five Central American countries and the Dominican Republic and in the coffee sector has been discussed sufficiently and is based on duly documented objective information. This information showed that there was a problem (or rather a series of problems) of child labor in the sector and in the geographical area of intervention. As we will discuss

below, certain external factors have meant that, when the evaluation took place, the problem identified was no longer as closely related to the concrete sector of intervention (coffee) as it was at the time of identification.

The idea that child labor is just one more manifestation of poverty, aggravated by the existence of inadequate socio-cultural attitudes, means that the problem is perceived clearly by most of the development agents, but not so clearly by some of the groups most directly involved. Consequently, the analysis of the problem must be carried out very thoroughly, communicated to all those involved, and discussed with all the participants.

The first finding we should indicate in this case is the relative weakness in the definition of the problem of child labor in the coffee sector, at both the subregional level and in the different countries involved, as well as in the geographical areas of intervention within those countries.

The problem, or rather the different problems that are encompassed in the principal issue have been defined in an excessively general manner, without defining their specific particularities, their most significant variants and the different causes. Hence, we can say that:

- i. The problem has not been depicted adequately. Although it is not explicit in the documents analyzed, one gets the feeling that the problem of child labor in the sector considered has been conceived as something static and permanent, without taking into account the more general and complex dimensions of the issue. Indeed, on most occasions, the problem is not so much that the children work in the coffee sector, but relates to child labor in the agricultural sector itself or, more generally, in rural areas. For the most part, children who work in rural areas eventually become workers with very low qualifications who are engaged sporadically in different activities. Linking the problem to a single crop often leads to inadequate solutions that end up by causing the “exit” of children from one activity to devote themselves to others that are often more hazardous.

Therefore, from the point of view of the beneficiary population (“boys and girls who work”), the problem is not well defined and refers to a partial aspect that can derive in solutions that are relatively inadequate.

- ii. The evaluation team has found that the characteristics of the work are more significant than distinctions based on the crop where child labor has been identified (coffee).

Thus, there appears to be an obvious difference between child labor on large farms by unskilled day laborers (as in the plantations of San Marcos in Guatemala and much of Jinotega and Matagalpa in Nicaragua) the work of “*colonato*” (also present in San Marcos and in Jinotega and Matagalpa) and/or work on small family exploitations (the case, for example, of Guanacaste in Costa Rica, La Trinidad – Santa Barbara in Honduras, and San José de Ocoa in the Dominican Republic, and even in the two departments of El Salvador).

Also, we must again insist that, in most of the cases we are looking at, child labor cannot be exclusively linked to one agricultural crop. When we speak of child labor

on family exploitations (small plots owned by parents and/or guardians), in reality, we find a very varied series of activities, not limited to a specific crop, or even to one sector. In the same way, in the case of child labor on large agricultural holdings, experience seems to show that the dimensions of child labor are more varied and complex than might have been considered originally.

- iii. The problem is inadequately quantified. Although studies have been carried out on the target population, the assessment of the general population affected by the problem is insufficient; this could mean that other situations of child labor in the sector have been overlooked.

These shortcomings in the diagnosis of the problems of child labor in the specific sector considered come to light in different areas:

- i. It has not been possible to consult diagnoses of the problem of child labor in agriculture at the country and regional level.¹ The baselines, whose characteristics and limitations will be dealt with below, have not accomplished this function.
- ii. Consequently, it is also not possible to analyze properly the relevance of the geographical selection of the areas of intervention or the groups of target population in each country.
- iii. The definition of crosscutting activities at the level of the Subregional Project is very inadequate as, in practice, it is limited to the question of monitoring and to proposing that some meetings and workshops should be held with those involved. This shortcoming reoccurs at the level of the National Projects, where crosscutting elements have almost no bearing on the respective activities.

3.2. National Projects and project documents

The National Projects reproduce, with few differences, the intervention strategy proposed by the Subregional Project. Perhaps the most notable of these differences is the substitution of the result of the meetings and workshops held with those involved in the different countries, by the result referring to the elaboration of baselines and other documents that are useful for planning.

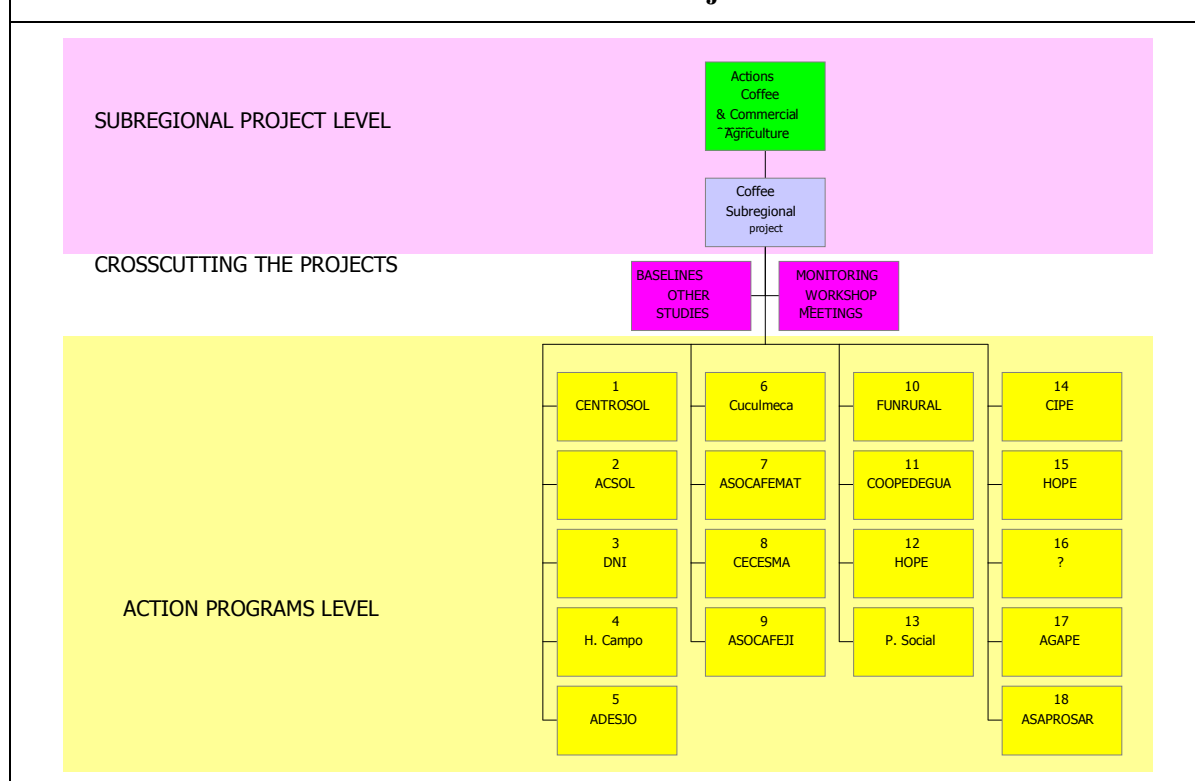
“Cascade” planning outlines generally suppose that the geographical area of a plan entails specific sectoral objectives for its programs and, once again, specific geographical objectives in the respective projects.² This is how the vertical logic of cascade planning operates. When the strategic approach is similar at two consecutive planning levels, the intervention logic becomes very weak, because the objective of the higher level remains the sum of the objectives of the lower level. Thus, if a geographical plan is established and geographical programs are also desired, the specific objective of the plan is usually a sum of the specific objectives of the programs (sum of the territorial area covered).

¹ It is only now that more complete descriptions are beginning to be published, probably as one of the positive effects of the project.

² There are many fewer sectoral plans with geographical programs and projects that are once again sectoral.

In the present case, the specific objectives of the National Projects are only “parts” of the specific subregional objective, which contribute little to the more general character of the intervention. From a methodological point of view, and with the exception of administrative matters, if the National Projects are dispensed with, this should not have a significant effect on the general intervention logic.

Table 4: Intervention outline without National Projects



Therefore, we may conclude that, faced with an inadequately defined problem, a standardized intervention strategy has been applied. The sequence in this phase of preparation may be described as follows:

- i. An objective has been quantified with limited knowledge of the problem confronted. The goals that appear in the project documents have been established *a priori*, without a minimally reliable diagnosis, or a realistic estimation of the possible impacts of the planned intervention.

This fact has had considerable importance, because it has significantly affected the entire subsequent strategy. On some occasions, in Guanacaste for example, the estimates included in the project document were higher than the total population of children in the community, which has caused difficulties in identifying the number of child workers that “would cover” the goals established in the project document; while, at other times, as in the case of San Marcos, the target group on which the objective was established constituted a minimum part of the population affected by the problem, which has caused difficulties subsequently when determining “who” should be considered the beneficiaries of the intervention and “who” should be excluded.

- ii. This predefined strategy had some “typical” components that may not respond to the problem in all circumstances. Thus, the “health” component appears in all the projects; however, in some it is merely indicated that the project will act as a “facilitator” before the local authorities, while others establish Action Programs to deal with the situation.

In Costa Rica, for example, it was decided that this component was not significant, presuming that the authorities were implementing effective health policies. In other cases, this component has been placed in the hands of “specialist” non-governmental agencies (Guatemala, Honduras), while in the remaining interventions, it has been implemented by an NGO without any special relationship to the issue.

- iii. It also included some pre-established resources, and adopted deadlines that were not calculated in function of implementing needs.
- iv. At times, it indicated implementing agencies whose selection criteria was not explicit and referred to geographical areas whose selection did not appear to respond to standardized criteria.

From the foregoing, we conclude that an excessively detailed project document had been drawn up, before there was a realistic estimate of the dimension of the problem and its causes. The problem arises when this document, which is inevitably a conjecture with little verification, becomes a kind of “strait-jacket” that directly affects the future intervention.

The model used appears to accept an intervention logic that explains the problem of child labor in the sector by four sets of causes:

- (i) Those deriving from the poor health of the population (or, perhaps, difficult access to health services);
- (ii) Those focused on poor schooling (or low levels of schooling, if we wish to include those who attend school as well as those who are outside the system);
- (iii) The decline in the level of the family income; and
- (iv) Those due to inadequate socio-cultural attitudes

This model of problem definition gives rise to a strategy of objectives and results that leads to a weak intervention logic. Thus:

- i. There are components whose contribution to achieving the objective of the prevention and elimination of child labor in the intervention sector is very doubtful, such as activities in the areas of health and education. This is much more visible if we analyze specific activities; for example, training midwives, dental care for children, vaccination and deparasitization campaigns, publication of first aid manuals, donation of school libraries, organization of sporting events, training teachers in educational techniques, or adult literacy.
- ii. There are a series of specific activities whose assignment to each of these components is very questionable. For example, the inclusion in the education component of “community” scholarships (negotiated for the community and not

individualized for each student) or providing food for school children (either through school meals or food supplements); and the supply of medicines to the health component, when such activities can be understood as contributing to reducing family expenditure (at least, this is how they appear to be understood by those involved).

- iii. The components that almost all those interviewed consider most directly related to child labor (particularly that of improving family income) have been analyzed in less detail and they have received less resources for implementation.
- iv. Even if we assume that activities must be assigned to the components considered, that they all contribute to their component, that these components have a clear “means to an end” relationship with the objective established, and that those activities in which this relationship is strongest have been correctly designed and implemented, there is a temporal problem that weakens the relationship between the means used and the end sought. For example, we can accept that an improvement in the quality of education has an impact on the reduction of child labor in the long term, and/or providing schooling to children will keep them away from work, but it is difficult to assert that these are viable activities in the short term, with permanent effects.

3.3. Baselines, Action Program planning and other studies

Some baselines studies were prepared and undertaken that have had very little effect on the Action Programs. In many other cases, the lapse of time between elaboration of the baselines and implementation of the Action Programs meant that they were no longer of any use.

Almost all the implementing agencies told the evaluation team that the baselines were not very useful and had to be re-elaborated as a first activity during the implementation stage, re-identifying the target populations. The main difficulties that appear to have affected the usefulness of the baselines are as follow:

- i. The baselines do not appear to have had a well-defined purpose, because, in some cases, we were told that it was to have a diagnosis of the situation, while in others, we were told that it was to survey the beneficiary population. These two purposes may be complementary, but this has not always been the case. Indeed, the second one seems to have been more important. For many of those involved in management aspects, the baselines should have provided a list with the names of the intended beneficiaries.
- ii. The baselines have been an effort to confirm the estimates of the beneficiary population established in the original project documents. In general, it can be said that the diagnosis was made to confirm the model and the goals included in the PRODOC.
- iii. All the baselines have been undertaken by agents who did not take part in the remaining intervention stages and they have used a standard model that was not appropriate for every circumstance.

The Action Programs reproduce the weak structure of the PRODOC, attempting to make a more detailed description of each component. The following issues arise from examining the Summary Outlines:

- i. The Action Programs Summary Outlines have respected and used the formats and tools suggested by the IPEC program correctly. In this respect, we can say that the IPEC experts know and apply the standard tools for planning interventions. Furthermore, significant progress has been made in this regard from the initial documents to those elaborated at a later date.
- ii. However, the Action Program Summary Outlines were not elaborated in a particularly participatory manner. Although processes of “vertical” consultation between the different actors have been used, there has been no group work with the latter and the other agents involved in the project. There have been a few participatory workshops for the formulation of programs. However, we can say that, basically, program preparation has been carried out in the office, by the experts of IPEC and the implementing agencies.
- iii. When considering solutions, the Summary Outlines have different levels of thoroughness but, in general, they do little to “individualize” the treatment of concrete problems. Thus, the components are identical, even though they have different activities. There are some differentiated activities (see Appendix V), and even some different understandings of the strategy, but it appears that these differences are more in function of the implementing agency (development experience, capability as an organization), than in relation to a case by case examination of the problems faced.
- iv. The temporal frame of reference of these Outlines is very weak. There are merely itemized timelines, limited to starting dates and durations, and they are generally the same, even though the situations differ (different problems, different capacity of access, number of different implementing agencies, different budgetary contributions, etc.). It is surprising that, in the face of different problems, with different numbers of beneficiaries, and with different budgets and more or less different activities, the duration of all the Action Programs is very similar (from 14 to 18 months). However, the contents of the work plan are somewhat better as regards the attribution of specific responsibilities and are much better when considering the lists of resources and the elaboration of the budget.

The required prior studies have not been “prior”. In general, the need for other studies to complement the design has arisen during the execution stage, so that their elaboration has been superimposed on the entry into operation of other components and activities (market research, descriptions of training needs, health diagnoses, socio-economic diagnoses, etc.). We have not heard of any significant prior study that was elaborated before the design of the Action Programs.

In total, the 18 Action Programs include more than 50 activities in the areas of action they encompass (see Appendix V).

4. Monitoring system and follow-up and evaluation design

The monitoring, follow-up and evaluation systems have had special importance in the Subregional Project. Monitoring child labor has been a fundamental component of the PRODOC and, indeed, it is one of the most important crosscutting issues of the Subregional Project.

This system has generated various criticisms among all those involved in the interventions, and we have detected serious concerns about its final design and its perspectives of viability.

- i. Initially there was some confusion between what was involved in monitoring child labor at the level of the Subregional Project (and in each National Project) and what was involved in the follow-up system for the Action Programs themselves. Even though this confusion has now been overcome for the most part, it has affected (and continues to affect) the performance of the teams that manage the Action Programs.
- ii. The purpose of the child labor monitoring system has never been sufficiently clear; the aim of this mechanism was not defined adequately, even though there seems to be some consensus that the ultimate goal was to learn about the situation of the target population in the Subregional Project.

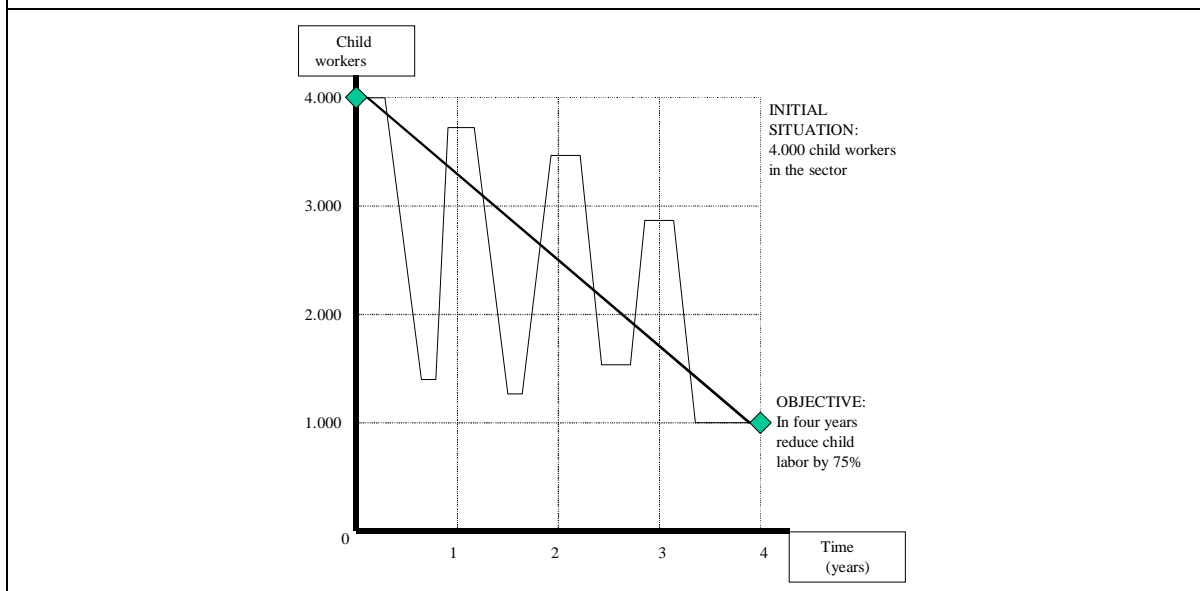
To put it simply, we can say that the fundamental purpose of the baselines was to “identify” the target population that had been defined in the project documents (in a totally aprioristic manner), while the monitoring system was intended to verify the situation of that population during the implementation period.

That initial conception has gradually given way to other formats, in which the implementation of systems to detect child labor situations “above and beyond” the specific situation of the target population itself appears to be more important.

- iii. There have been at least three changes in direction of the monitoring system (which makes it difficult to evaluate). Initially, the system absorbed a large amount of resources (groups of “inspectors”, transportation, databases, etc.). Once this initial concept had been rejected, the implementation of an on-line database was proposed, but this did not achieve the expected results either. Now there is a tendency to elaborate *ad hoc* systems, based on local capacities and with a greater variety of concepts and options.
- iv. In any case, it appears that the intention is to have a “continuous” evaluation system of the situation of child workers in the sector. This is a conceptual error in the context of development interventions: any type of monitoring and/or follow-up is conducted on activities, not on target populations. Some kind of follow-up on results may be introduced (“results-based project management”), but never on objectives: data obtained from measuring an objective (generally, its indicators) before the date on which it is supposed to be achieved is irrelevant.
- v. This error may be visualized rapidly in the following table, which shows the limited relevance of establishing a “permanent” monitoring system on the employment situation of a specific group of the population. Changes in the employment situation have little significance and are very costly to verify. If there is a need to know the

situation of the beneficiary group at a specific moment of project execution, it seems more logical to make a survey, which uses many less resources and provides more significant information.

Estimate of the behavior of child labor in the coffee sector



The foregoing seems to indicate that there has been some confusion (mostly overcome) between, at least, four issues that should be clearly differentiated:

- ✓ First, a system for following-up on the development interventions included in the Subregional Project. Strictly speaking, follow-up is a function that, on the basis of an information system on the progress of activities and the use of resources, tries to compare what was planned and what is being done in order to detect and correct variances. This type of mechanism is necessary for the management of any project; it provides information on activities and resources (and, at times on contacts with the beneficiaries and the evolution of external factors) and is the responsibility of the management of each development intervention.
- ✓ Second, an information system on the situation of child labor in the geographical area and in the sector of intervention of the Subregional Project. This is the implementation of an information system that provides information on the situation of child labor in the area and sector, at specific moments in time. In the present case, ILO supports the inclusion of a module on child labor in the home surveys conducted in the subregion. To resolve the issue of obtaining information on child labor, it would be sufficient to disaggregate the data of the sector and area of interest, make spot checks during the period “between surveys,” and analyze the data obtained.
- ✓ Third, a system that periodically provides information on the “employment” or, in its absence, educational situation of the children considered to be the target population of the Subregional Project. Regardless of the usefulness of this type of information, it appears that what is being proposed here is to carry out periodic evaluations of the progress of the projects, focused on levels of indicators. The latter

is a fairly complex procedure, because, even in the case of the simplest possible solution (using surveys and projections), it demands considerable resources.

- ✓ Lastly, an early warning system that permits the implementation of actions for the progressive elimination of child labor in areas and sectors where a specific threshold of occurrence is crossed. The system is somewhat less complicated than the previous one and demands less resources, although its degree of reliability will always be equal to the effort invested in it.

Throughout the implementation of the projects, the four information systems have been confused and this has resulted in different approaches to their treatment. The conceptual confusion and the different approaches applied have led to inoperable systems whose goals are at times contradictory. In the final phases of execution, it appears that the differences between the first system (follow-up on interventions) and the second (situation of child labor in the region and sector) have been understood.

The need for the third system (the one that provides periodic information on the situation of the beneficiaries of the projects) is debatable; particularly when we bear in mind that the work should be conducted by those responsible for implementation, and that there appear to be no mechanisms for reacting to the information provided by the system. Apparently, it originated from a request by the donor agency, because it wanted to know the situation of the beneficiaries every few months (although the donor agency has indicated that it arose from an offer by IPEC, which used the information system in other sectors).

To comply with the request, all the beneficiaries of the interventions were surveyed and an attempt was made to apply a personalized information system to each one (first with “motorized” monitors and later by the inclusion of the information in increasingly complex databases). The intention was to know the “employment situation” of each beneficiary at all times (and, it seems, that of the members of their family), in relation to their schooling situation, as the indicator nearest to the work situation, and to act in consequence of that situation. To be successful, this type of system would require resources that are not available, because it is not based on local capacity or on the possibilities of IPEC, and, above all, because the willingness to collaborate of the person surveyed (who has no incentive to participate) would be absolutely necessary. Moreover, even if the necessary resources were available for the system, its usefulness is very doubtful:

- i. The information it would provide has little relevance for the aspect it is intended to measure.
- ii. Even if the information were obtained, the Subregional Project, the National Projects and the Programs are not capable of reacting to it.
- iii. The sustainability of this type of system is almost impossible; it uses so many resources that no organization can take over its operation once the project is finished.

Logically, the system never functioned properly, because the phenomenon of child labor in agriculture is very complex and is influenced by many variables, with periods of schooling alternating with periods of dropping out, and even including employment

situations although the children are still in school. Furthermore, the population “entered” and “exited” the zones of intervention, owing to different migratory factors, which meant that the information system almost never provided information and when it did, there was no capacity to react to the data obtained.

The model implemented was much better adapted to emergency assistance interventions than to development projects, because it is well known that surveys contribute very little to this type of intervention. Even acknowledging the need to know the situation of the target population from time to time, the simplest way of obtaining this information should not be a survey and the individualized “follow-up” of the beneficiaries.

In reality, the information being requested is the status of the school attendance indicator in the zone on specific dates and this information is generated in the schools. If the aim is to know by how much child labor has decreased in a specific zone over a specific period (every three or four months, for example), and we accept that the school attendance rate is a proxy indicator of child labor,³ it would be sufficient to describe and quantify the existing problem adequately at the outset and compare school attendance lists. To do this, it is not necessary to complete complex questionnaires on a determined beneficiary and his personal and family situation. It is not important to know who is in school and who is working, but rather by how much school attendance in the zone has increased and how many individuals are affected by the problem in question. Whether the change in these variables over time was due to the project or to another series of factors would then have to be evaluated.

In brief, owing either to a request by the donor agency or an offer by IPEC, a system of “continuous evaluation” to provide information periodically on the situation of the target population was proposed, based on the individualized tracking of beneficiaries. This is extremely complex and has proved to be inoperable, and it would have been sufficient to quantify the problem adequately and to compare school attendance lists (duly processed to eliminate biases relating to the seasonal nature of employment in agriculture).

If the system established was already having problems in generating relevant information, matters were complicated when it was decided to complement it with an early warning system on certain child labor situations. The information resulting from the “continuous evaluation” system was of little use and the system was not able to respond to particularly problematic situations of child labor. To the contrary, an early warning system on certain child labor situations of great concern is clearly very useful, but this is sensible, regardless of the mechanisms established to provide information on the situation of the project beneficiaries. An early warning system can be an adequate way of preventing and progressively eliminating child labor, provided that at least two factors are present:

- The objective is to tackle a problem that remains hidden, that results from unknown causes or that has suddenly appeared in specific areas (probably these are cases of the worst forms of child labor).

³ In any case, the relationship between the child labor and school attendance variables would have to be established.

- It is accompanied by specific measures. A warning system does not make much sense if there is no response capacity.

Despite the above, the procedure described has generated some important positive effects for those involved, since it helped distinguish between the concepts of follow-up and evaluation, revealed the limited usefulness of “continuous evaluation” and the futility of surveys, and demonstrated the need to have good diagnoses that describe and quantify the problems.

Bearing in mind the foregoing, it appears desirable to suggest the following:

- i. A clear distinction should be made between the systems for following-up on projects and programs, and the systems for monitoring child labor.
- ii. The former focuses on analyzing the activities carried out (resources, timing, implementation responsibilities, reactions of those involved, etc.) and, perhaps, on the achievement of interim results. Therefore, it does not seem reasonable to carry out periodic assessments of the achievement of objectives, because the information collected has little relevance and tends to consume excessive resources.
- iii. A monitoring system on the situation of child labor in the areas of intervention should evidently be based on local resources and relevant experiences. Therefore, different systems should be implemented (not a model that can be replicated in each zone), which involve the different groups and institutions concerned. These mechanisms should be conceived as early warning systems that can identify cases of child labor (and/or child abuse) and allow appropriate reports to be filed before the responsible institutions. They should be systems that do not require much effort, that consume relatively few resources and, as previously mentioned, that are based on installed capacity at the local level.

Experience appears to show that the lists drawn up by teachers or health workers often provide the basis for organizing an early warning system on the situation of child labor. The more interesting initiatives that the evaluation team was able to examine were focused precisely on a creative use of existing sources of information. Thus, in San José de Ocoa, with the aid of the project, rural teachers have developed systems for detecting child workers who do not attend school. In El Salvador, also, information from schools and health workers are an important source for detecting cases of child workers.

- iv. On most occasions, these systems do not need a database, such as the one that there have been insistent attempts to set up. The lack of resources in the areas of intervention and the lack of personnel available to update the information mean that the proposed solutions are often inappropriate.

5. Management and performance of the interventions

The evaluation did not concentrate its main efforts on examining the management and performance of the different Action Programs included in the National Projects. The previous interim evaluation focused on those aspects, so that it was not considered

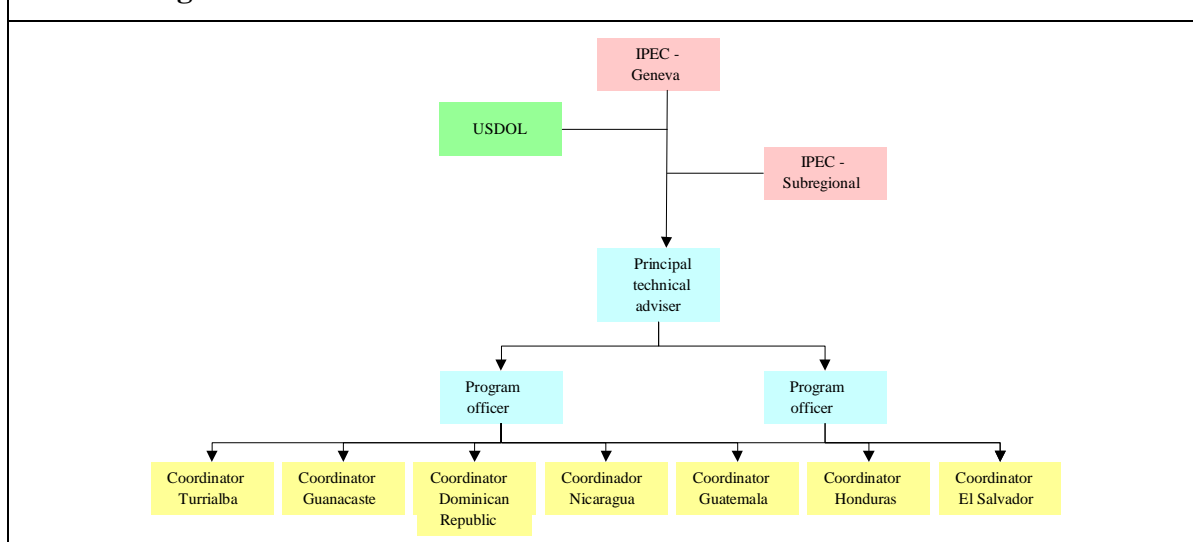
appropriate to insist on this matter. However, the following are general observations on this aspect.

5.1. Organizational structure and procedures

a) Description of the organizational structure

The organizational structure was modified during the period of execution, which makes it difficult to evaluate. Basically, there has been a central management structure located in San José, Costa Rica, made up of a Senior Technical Adviser and two Program Officers (currently reduced to only one). In addition, it is important to recall the function of administrative and technical coordination (backstopping) at headquarters in Geneva. The project coordinators are at the level closest to implementation. Each National Project has a coordinator, with the exception of Costa Rica, where there are two (Guanacaste and Turrialba) with clearly differentiated responsibilities.

Table 5: Organizational structure



b) Evaluation of the structure

- i. There appears to be a lack of definition about whether the general structure of IPEC in the subregion follows an organization by projects logic or a territorial structure. The function of the national coordinators in the daily management of the National Project has never been sufficiently defined.
 - (1) Initially, it was decided to establish an operational structure which was clearly differentiated from the general IPEC structure and which tended to form an autonomous management unit (independent management, different national offices, etc.).
 - (2) Subsequently, and in part due to the adoption of the recommendations of the interim evaluation, there has been greater coordination between the national officers and those responsible for the Subregional Project.

These changes have resulted in a lack of definition of the functions of the national coordinators. Although the general trend has been towards their increased involvement in the management of the National Projects, there are differences in each country; fundamentally these appear to stem from the management style of the different individuals in the different countries. It appears that there is no clear and precise definition of the functions of the national coordinators in relation to the specific projects, and this produces a great variety of situations.

- ii. The same can be said of the functions and responsibilities of the project coordinators. At times, they appear to have acted as *de facto* directors of the different projects, although the fact that there are almost no resources for direct execution made it difficult for them to fully assume this role; in other case, they have acted more as coordinators between the different implementing agencies (with an authority that had to be established in each case); and, lastly, there were other situations in which they have acted more like supervisors, responsible for preparing progress reports. Evidently, these functions are not always exclusive, but it appears desirable to define more clearly the responsibilities of these coordinators, because this would help mitigate some of the difficulties detected during the execution stage.
- iii. Something similar occurs with regard to the functions of the management personnel in the Subregional Coordination Office. The technical management functions of the Subregional Project and the advisory services to the different coordinators in the field have, at times, been put to one side, in the face of the increased importance of the information management tasks generated by the interventions (compliance with follow-up reports). One has the feeling that the main activity of the personnel in the Subregional Coordination Office has been preparing progress reports, and this has doubtlessly adversely affected the other tasks they were assigned.
- iv. Finally, some difficulties have also been identified as regards the responsibilities of the program coordinators in the implementing agencies. This aspect will be dealt with in more detail in the next section, although here we can indicate that there have often been problems of coordination between the different implementing agencies responsible for the Action Programs that form part of a same project.

Despite the above, the structure has proved operable, owing more to the determination of those involved than to the appropriateness of its design. The efforts of those responsible for execution have permitted the components to be implemented and managed, despite weaknesses in the definition of responsibilities in the design. For future initiatives, the responsibilities of the participants should be established previously. It appears desirable that the projects should be more actively integrated into the subregional structure of IPEC, with greater responsibilities for the national coordinators, and the technical advisers and program officers would have a technical support function with a crosscutting approach.

c) Management of the components

With regard to the management of the different components that comprise the strategy of all the projects, the principal conclusion relates to its extreme unevenness.

- i. Regarding awareness raising, implementation has usually been carried out in a fairly hurried manner owing probably to the “ease” of executing most of its activities and

to the haste to begin the implementation stage (the “administrative pressure” to begin executing some of the components on the scheduled dates). At times, there has been some duplication of activities; thus, in some cases in which the awareness raising was not implemented by the same agency as the education and health components, those responsible for the latter ended up conducting awareness-raising activities also.

Lastly, it can be said that the awareness-raising component has sometimes (as in the project in El Salvador), been directed at social mobilization and the community and, at other times (San Marcos in Guatemala), at publicity and the public in general. We have the feeling that the approach promoted by the implementing agencies has been very important in both cases.

- ii. Education has been a significant component in all the projects and has been directed more towards the quality of education than to the quantity of children, more towards improving education than to the effective elimination of child labor. It must be acknowledged that both objectives are clearly related, but they are different factors and are not always equivalent.

Few activities have been implemented outside the school, which has become the principal reference point of most projects; in general, there has been excellent involvement by counterpart organizations. However, there is a perception that the principal activities in this component that have had a direct influence on child labor have been the donation of materials (text books, school supplies, uniforms, etc.), food and scholarships.

- iii. The health component has been more disperse in conception and in execution, because it has not been incorporated into some projects (Costa Rica), some projects have only “facilitated” processes carried out by other institutions, and, on other occasions, the Project has taken on the principal responsibility for implementation directly through Action Programs.

This component has included any type of activity linked to health, although not always related to the target population, and the program itself has had less visibility, eclipsed by the implementing agencies. On several occasions, the evaluation team has heard that the beneficiary population identifies the Action Program as the “project” of the implementing agency, while no clear relationship is established with the objective of eliminating child labor. The tables included in chapter 2 and Appendix V list such disperse activities as “dental care” (Turrialba, Honduras and El Salvador), “midwife training” (Guatemala), “first-aid manual” (Honduras), and “AIDS prevention” (Guatemala).

- iv. The component of alternatives to increase family income has been the slowest to implement, its design has usually been weak (which affects implementation), it has had less resources (which have still not been disbursed in some cases), and it covers a much more limited population than the other components. This is of particular concern if we consider that it is the component with the highest impact on the achievement of the objective of the projects. Specifically, this component has not yet commenced in the project in Honduras, is almost at a standstill in the project in the Dominican Republic (San José de Ocoa) and in Guatemala (San Marcos), and has still had a limited impact in the other cases.

We have been informed that, among other reasons, the standstill is due to the fact that, at the beginning of 2003, the donor agency clarified to the ILO its position concerning the impossibility of allocating resources to revolving loan funds, which led to the need to rethink the project's plans concerning its income generation strategy. It is important to highlight, however, that the income generation component of both projects suffered delays previously to this decision. However, a clear position should be taken on this issue as soon as possible, because considerable expectations have been created that may not be satisfied, and this would undoubtedly produce major frustrations.

5.2 Implementation mechanisms

a) Selection of implementing agencies

The criteria justifying the selection of the implementing agencies responsible for the different components that form part of the National Projects has never been explicit or sufficiently clear. Indeed, there appears to be considerable diversity in the number and characteristics of the agencies selected for each project. The most extreme cases are those of the Guatemala-San Marcos project, in which four different agencies implement each component, and the Dominican Republic-San José de Ocoa project, where a single agency is responsible for the four components. The projects in Costa Rica-Turrialba, Costa Rica-Guanacaste, El Salvador, Honduras-La Trinidad (although the alternative income generation component has still not been implemented), Honduras-Marcovia (where the alternative income generation component also remains to be implemented), Nicaragua-Jinotega and Nicaragua-Matagalpa all have two implementing agencies.

Table 6: Number of implementing agencies for each project	
PROJECTS	No. of agencies
San José de Ocoa – the Dominican Republic	1
Turrialba – Costa Rica	2
Guanacaste / Puntarenas – Costa Rica	2
El Salvador	2
La Trinidad – Honduras	2
Jinotega and Matagalpa – Nicaragua	2
San Marcos – Guatemala	4

Almost all the implementing agencies are non-governmental organizations. Some are pastoral organizations (*pastorales*) or consultants. Preference seems to have been given to institutions with a significant presence in the zone of intervention, although it has not been possible to confirm this approach in all cases. At times, the implementing agencies identified in the project documents are not those that ended up being responsible for the design and execution of the different Action Programs. Three main reasons for these changes have been identified:

- ✓ At times this appears to be due to pressure and suggestions from the participating and/or counterpart public authorities. This may have been the case of the changes in organizations in Honduras and El Salvador. The delicate political situation and the changes brought about by elections in the Central American countries, together with the distrust that some administrations have for organizations that appear to be linked to previous administrations, have resulted in pressures on the process of selecting implementing agencies. We were informed that organizations were chosen for political rather than technical reasons in some cases.
- ✓ At other times, the agencies themselves declined to take part in projects when they understood the conditions imposed by IPEC. In this regard, the organizations commented unanimously on the fact that the so-called “indirect costs” or overheads relating to their participation were not taken into consideration. The preparation and execution of activities entail management costs and these are not included in the budgets, or in the Action Programs, or in the project documents. It is normal practice that budgets of international cooperation development projects include amounts to cover the fixed costs of the implementing agencies. The fact that these amounts were not included in the budgets of the Action Programs has two immediate consequences:
 - It deters organizations from participating. We have heard of organizations that took part in the elaboration of the programs and then refused to participate when the budget was being negotiated and they found that there was no financial incentive for their work.
 - Among the organizations who decided to participate, despite the lack of financial incentive, there is a feeling that the fixed costs should be covered by the program, even when there is no specific budget item; this leads to attempts to have invoices accepted that, in principle, cannot be justified according to the estimated budget.

In any case, it appears that the lack of incentives has forced out certain organizations. Some kind of incentive should be established for the participation of the organizations, either a direct financial incentive (covering indirect or management costs) or via another resource (the donation of computer equipment, vehicles, motorcycles, etc. that are already part of the project has been suggested).

- ✓ Finally, there have been cases when it has been considered that the institutions do not fulfil minimum standards of quality and their participation has been rejected. In this way, some organizations that participated initially subsequently proved to be ineffective and/or inefficient.

b) Participation of implementing agencies

As a rule, the implementing agencies have not taken part in the preparation of the project documents, although, in a few isolated cases, some personnel linked to the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been involved in the process of designing the PRODOC. The implementing agencies have usually been invited to participate in drafting the Action Programs, following a pre-established model. There are also some exceptions that break away from this general pattern.

Most of the implementing agencies complained to the evaluation team about difficulties in drafting the Action Programs and about delays in obtaining final approval for them. There have been constant modifications in the Action Programs. We heard of cases in which there were more than ten versions of an action program. The delays in approval have also been very significant. At times, the starting date of the Action Programs has been delayed by more than a year.

Almost all the Action Programs have been prepared as a result of deskwork, with little participation by the groups involved. In isolated cases there appear to have been some identification workshops, although the evaluation team has not been able to examine the tangible results of these meetings, and they are not available at project headquarters in the San José office.

It is difficult to determine the overall relevance of the activities for achieving the expected objectives; but, in some cases, we felt that they may have responded more to the regular actions of the implementing agencies than to a solid intervention logic that contributes to achieving the project objective. In any case, since, for the reasons already explained, this report does not make a detailed analysis of each National Project, it is not possible to propose general conclusions in this respect.

c) “Division” of the projects and coordination between implementing agencies

Coordination among the different implementing agencies responsible for each component has also been a problem. In general, each program has been formulated individually, without taking into account the other institutions involved in management. The evaluation team has not been able to find any example where there is a common document, apart from the PRODOC itself. For example, there are no implementation timelines listing all the activities that are the responsibility of each of the implementing agencies.

In principle, all the implementing agencies take part in execution on similar terms and conditions. Only in some cases, has it been noted that an agency may have a certain leadership role in the implementation process, establishing a sort of coordination.

There are some doubts about the advantages and disadvantages of a system such as the one that finally operated during the period of execution. In general, the “division” of the project into components-programs tends to reduce the coherence of the intervention as a whole, hampers coordination, and contributes to each action program being conceived as a project in itself, often identified with the implementing agency.

This is particularly visible in the income-generation component, because the target population is distinct from the other components (not only because it has to focus on parents and guardians rather than on children), generally has a more limited coverage (measures of support are not usually awarded to all the families involved), and the implementing agency rarely participates in other components. We know of other IPEC projects where the Action Programs were entrusted to a single implementing agency, which, if it did not have the necessary experience in the income-generation component, “subcontracted” these activities to experienced organizations.

The coherence of the project seems to have depended on the leadership capacity of the project coordinators and the relationships established between them and the

implementing agencies. In general, when the latter are large institutions, they tend to reject close supervisions by the IPEC coordinator.

The main advantages of the chosen system of execution appear to be the possibility of selecting specialized institutions for each component (although this has not always been possible), rather than depending exclusively on one organization, which would presumably place it in a position of strength. Bearing in mind the foregoing, we can extract some conclusions and make some recommendations about the methods of implementation:

- ✓ The criteria for selecting the implementing agencies have not been sufficiently clear and should be systematized in the future. Political pressures are manageable, when negotiations are carried out from a technical point of view; consequently, it is necessary to have explicit selection criteria.
- ✓ The larger organizations have no incentive to participate in execution. It is necessary to design a system of incentives for their participation, which, at least, permits the fixed operating costs represented by their involvement in these programs to be covered.
- ✓ Bearing in mind that all the National Project documents have a similar structure, almost the only difference being the number of beneficiaries and the area of intervention, they have not been useful for formulating the Action Programs. In addition, the Action Programs have been formulated with limited participation by the beneficiary groups of the area.
- ✓ To remedy the two previous points, a planning process could be considered that initially started from the top (at the level of what is now the Subregional Project), so that, from this point the perspective was changed, allowing for a new planning stage starting at the bottom, from the interventions to projects and programs that give content to the Subregional Project.
- ✓ Coordination between implementing agencies has generally been inadequate, although there have been notable exceptions. This coordination should be strengthened starting at the time of formulation. Joint programming of activities would facilitate implementation and supervision by the coordinators. In general, it does not appear desirable to divide up the projects by components and by implementing agencies. The negative aspects of this “division” seem more important than the possible advantages.
- ✓ The possibility of some components being executed by public institutions could be considered. Specifically, the regional delegations of the different Ministries of Education and the municipalities could play a more important role in implementation. It might also be interesting for some components to be carried out by direct execution by the IPEC coordinators (or subcontracted to a consultant). These two ideas would also help to strengthen coordination and complementarity with efforts undertaken by other donors, particularly as regards their interrelation with municipal and ministerial development plans, and would also make information about other interventions available.

5.3. Time limits, timing, use of resources

We note that there have been delays and postponements during the implementation of the activities included in most of the Action Programs. The main evidence for this is that what should be a final evaluation has found the immense majority of the interventions still being implemented. There are various reasons for these delays and they are both intrinsic to the Organization and external to this unit.

- i. Among those intrinsic to the Organization, we should underscore the complex processes for approval of the documents and disbursement of the amounts necessary for implementation, and the modification of the procedure in some components. In general, there has been some delay in the approval of the different intervention proposals. As we have already indicated, on many occasions there have been an excessive number of versions of the different Action Programs. The decision-making structure has often been dysfunctional. Also, changes in the approach of some components (essentially with regard to everything relating to the child labor monitoring system) have resulted in delays and an inefficient use of resources.
- ii. Among those that appear to be the responsibility of the donor agency are the change in approach of some components and a lack of definition of the budgetary items that can be financed.⁴ This has been particularly evident in the alternative income generation component, which has been significant because there is a general consensus as to the elevated relationship between this component and achievement of the objective of the projects. At present, there are projects where implementation of this component has not started or is at a standstill. It is urgent to define the scope of the component and the methods of support that can be used.
- iii. Those of an external character have very varied causes, which range from the occurrence of natural disasters to strikes in the sectors concerned (strikes by teachers have been important and prolonged in several of the countries involved), and include the effects of long periods of elections and new governments taking office, as well as changes in implementing agencies, and non-compliance with deadlines and commitments by subcontracted entities, etc.

The above has resulted in a complex control procedure, with a multitude of reports, management of irrelevant information and complicated formulas, which has been a particularly sensitive issue for the experts involved in execution.

5.4. Information management

Information management has been one of the issues mentioned most frequently to the evaluation team. Some experts from the operating structure of the Subregional Project seem to be overburdened with work, owing directly to the information management requirements to which they are subject. It appears logical to presume that a procedure

⁴ It is important to note that the income generation component was already delayed at the moment this decision was made. Consequently, this issue should be considered as one factor among others, probably not the decisive one, in causing further delays. USDOL clarified its position on Revolving Loan Funds to ILO through a letter dated April 9, 2003. In this letter, USDOL requested IPEC to explore options for reprogramming the loan money. The consideration of alternatives and the necessary negotiations that followed were logically translated in delays in the implementation of the component.

should be put in place for controlling and following-up on what has been implemented and that this information should be available for the different institutions concerned.

Two follow-up reports are presented: the project reports quarterly according to agreed procedures between IPEC and the donor and the implementing agencies report every four months, following IPEC procedures. The former includes six-monthly Technical Progress Reports in March and September and updates through Status Reports in June and December, requesting assessments of achievement of objectives, efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability. These reports must be translated into English and forwarded to USDOL after their review (and translation) at the offices in San José and in Geneva. The others are presented by the implementing agencies for each Action Program. These requirements mean that a great deal of the time of the technical personnel in the San José office is occupied in reviewing, preparing and translating reports, which means that they cannot devote their efforts to other aspects of management and technical assistance to the interventions.

- ✓ The reporting periods seem to be too short. It is unlikely that there is relevant information every three or four months justifying the effort that has to be made. Reports should be submitted every six months; it seems that this is already beginning to be done.
- ✓ It appears logical that attempts should be made to unify the formats and time limits for presenting the different reports, so as not to duplicate efforts. In general, the formats for the follow-up reports should be simplified.
- ✓ Much of the information included in the reports appears to have little relevance. Specifically, it seems illogical to try and define the contribution to the achievement of the objective (the number of children withdrawn from work) every three months.
- ✓ There are serious problems in managing the volume of information generated. Final approval of the reports can be delayed for almost a year, which indicates the backlog of pending work.
- ✓ It would be reasonable to consider the possibility of presenting one follow-up report for each project, and not for each Action Program, as has been the case to date. This would reduce the number of reports from 18 to 7.

6. Results and effects of the interventions

a) Achievement of results

- i. In the awareness-raising component, there has been an appreciable increase in the parents' awareness of the problem of child labor (although some of them allege that their economic situation is the reason for keeping their children working, despite being aware of the significant consequences). There has also been an increase in the awareness of the producers, and of the children about their rights (although, once again, the economic situation makes some of them continue seeking work) and, particularly, appropriate consideration of the problem by the institutions involved.

- ii. As regards the health of the children, who are the target of the programs, it seems obvious that this has improved, and there has also been an improvement in the general health of the community (although to a lesser extent perhaps).
- iii. The component to improve the income of family units with child workers has not achieved its objective. In this respect, the issue is being handled well in some places and this means that there is a good potential, but important concerns continue to exist at all levels of those involved, which leads us to assess the future achievement of this result as doubtful, at the very least
- iv. The educational component has unquestionably ensured an increase in school attendance and a decrease in the failure rate (understood as absenteeism plus the rate of repetition) as well as an improvement in the quality of education for the child workers already in the system.

b) Achievement of the specific objective

However, for several reasons, the achievement of a significant part of the results does not ensure achievement of the specific objective, understood as the progressive withdrawal and prevention of child labor:

- i. The design logic is inadequate. We have already mentioned that the contribution of some of the components to the elimination of child labor is doubtful, while the result that has not been achieved corresponds to the component that is most closely linked to it.
- ii. The inadequacy of the indicators for the purpose of evaluating child labor. There appears to be a relationship between school attendance and child labor and between awareness raising and child labor; however, these concepts are not the same, particularly when dealing with children who are seasonal and/or occasional workers.
- iii. Some external factors have hampered the establishment of a directed relationship of cause and effect between activities, results and objectives. Undoubtedly, the main one has been the crisis in the coffee-growing sector, which, in itself and irrespective of the project and its programs, has contributed to the withdrawal of child (and adult) labor, although it could also have operated to a lesser degree in the opposite direction.

We should also mention other factors, such as strikes, elections and changes in government.

c) Other effects

We should point out that more positive effects have been generated than negative ones, in particular:

- i. Among the positive effects, the increase in school attendance, the decrease in the school failure rate and the improvement in the quality of education above and beyond the target population, the revelation of hidden problems relating to the situation of children, the acceleration of institutional processes to assume commitments relating to the problem (in addition to those institutions directly

involved), social mobilization and collaboration by institutions that were not participating initially, the transfer of expertise and methods to improve the quality of education, the promotion of processes to improve the general health of the population in the areas of intervention and, in general, an effect of integral social protection of children.

- ii. The most important negative factors include distortions in the educational systems, the capacity of some schools has been overextended, expectations have been raised and not fulfilled, a possible increase of other types of child labor, and an increase in the operating costs of some institutions.

6.1. Relevance and causality

a) Regarding adequate identification of the problem:

- i. The problem of child labor in the Central American agricultural sector is more serious than was traditionally considered. Indeed, until relatively recently, this problem was hidden or minimized, and its existence was sometimes even totally denied. It should be acknowledged that an important achievement of the general IPEC strategy has been to bring to light a reality to which little importance had been given. Therefore, in general, it must be recognized that the initiative was very relevant.
- ii. Having made this very positive initial assessment, we must add that the description of the problem (or rather problems) of child labor in agriculture in the Central American subregion and in the Dominican Republic has suffered from some degree of generalization. The problem has been linked to specific crops, when, in most cases, child labor in the sector is characterized by being seasonal and by the diversity of the activities.

The evaluation team has found greater significance in the differences between agricultural child labor on family plots (whether these are for coffee or, more usually, for different crops) and agricultural child labor for third parties, usually on large exploitations. Perhaps this is one of the principal findings of the evaluation: the problem of child labor in the sector is related more to the exploitation model where it takes place than to the crop, or the geographical area in which it occurs. Should this assertion be true, interventions should focus more on thematic areas than on sectoral or geographical factors (child labor in family agriculture, or in plantations, or under tenant farming regimes (*colonatos*), instead of child labor in a specific agricultural crop or in a specific geographical area).

The problem is probably less visible but more difficult to deal with when it occurs in family plots where child workers carry out numerous activities. Agricultural child labor is a complex problem, where children or adolescents perform a multitude of tasks and a diversity of activities, regardless of the predominant crop or the geographical area where they occur, which interfere with their education and recreation. The “extreme manifestations” of the problem – children who are permanently occupied in agricultural exploitations with interminable days and grueling work – are undoubtedly not the most general, but rather the minority, in rural areas where children are deprived of their rights because of the need to support

the family economy, not so much by contributing income as by covering the costs of their own survival.

Thus, in small family rural plots (which rarely exceed the concept of “backyard”), children perform a series of tasks tending to cover the cost of their food, clothes and initial schooling.⁵

When they earn more than the cost of their own maintenance, and provided the market situation allows it, they then perform a work function, where earnings become the priority of their activity. As of that moment, the problem is of greater concern. Child labor in the sector is no longer exclusively devoted to covering the costs of the minor, but also to contributing to the family income.

Although, initially, it is complicated to clarify the thin line that exists between collaborating in domestic chores (extended to the backyard) and what is considered child labor, as children get older, with greater difficulties to access secondary education, child labor becomes common and evident, even in family plots. As the child grows older, the tasks and responsibilities of boys and girls diversify, and this has not been given sufficient consideration in the project, since girls are always more negatively affected as regards access to secondary education.

The analysis of this problem is made more difficult when we consider that the work is affected by the seasonal nature of production, by the temporary nature of the tasks performed, by the diversity of tasks, and by the cultural attitudes that tend to minimize the consequences. Consequently, the situation has little visibility and is nuanced by the fact that few young children do not attend school; therefore, it appears that non-attendance affects few minors, and signs such as irregular attendance, dropping out and high rates of repetition are much more important.

Non-attendance is more of a problem in other types of child labor; for example, among children who work in plantations belonging to third parties. In such cases, the problem is much more visible, although it should also be nuanced. The evaluation has identified few examples of children or adolescents who are permanent workers in agricultural exploitations (although this would be the most evident sign). To the contrary, many children who work for third parties do so alongside their parents or guardians, and may be considered a seasonal migrant population that moves in function of crop cycles, fundamentally at harvest times, where all possible family manpower is welcome, because this type of work usually pays by the quantity produced, regardless of who performs the work. In many cases (not all), harvest coincides with the school holiday period, so that the school attendance rate is not a good proxy indicator of child labor.

Although these cases seem to be more “serious” than those of work on family plots, they also appear to be easier to deal with, because, to a great extent, they depend on the employers’ response.

The problem represented by the child population linked to the tenant-farming regime (*colonato*) is different. This regime has various manifestations in Central

⁵ In the Appendices that include the surveys, we can see that both children and parents explain that their own work is aimed at obtaining resources to pay schooling costs.

America, from families who live and work as permanent employees on exploitations that are owned by third parties, to families who have access (they generally enjoy usufruct but not legal ownership) to small plots that they exploit under contract to companies that export agricultural products, and including families who produce “by agreement” (*al partido*), in a sort of share-cropping regime.

In the first type of tenant-farming regime, children and adolescents are not usually hired, but perform tasks to support their elders who work for the owners. A variable that should be considered in this case is the cost of transport to school. In the case of small plots exploited by families under contract to export companies, the problem is very similar to that of the family plots, but may involve a greater commitment owing to the elevated need for seasonal labor. As for work in the share-cropping regime, child labor may include a mixture of all the problems mentioned above.

In any case, it appears that unless initiatives are undertaken with agricultural workers without access to land, any action that simplifies the problem results, in the short term, in the most common situation: children and adolescents who work on small plots (often reduced to the family backyard) of their parents or guardians, in numerous activities, subject to the significant seasonal character of the work.

b) Proposed solution and selection of the area of intervention

- iii. Added to the inadequate definition of the problem – origin of the initiative – the intervention strategy proposed in order to resolve it has been essentially the same in all circumstances. Basically, it has consisted in undertaking a series of actions based on four components (education, health, awareness raising and alternative income generation), whose relationship to the planned objective (the progressive elimination of child labor) is not always clear. Although this relationship appears to be significant in the awareness-raising and alternative income generation components, it is less so in the case of education (particularly in specific activities included in this result) and poses serious doubts in the health component.
- iv. The selection of the zones of intervention does not display a homogeneous pattern. Although they were adequately agreed on with the authorities involved in the intervention (which is obviously positive), there is apparently no decisive factor, or series of criteria, to explain the selection.

As previously mentioned, the determination of the number of beneficiaries included in each project document has been fairly arbitrary and, at times, rather unrealistic, and has caused serious problems in the general management of the intervention.

c) Participation, strategy and involvement of the recipients

- v. The involvement of the counterpart institutions (essentially, the Ministries of Labor) appears to have been adequate for the most part. The evaluation team was able to meet with the Ministers of Labor of Nicaragua and El Salvador and with Vice Ministers or very senior officials in the remaining countries and, in all cases, opinions on the project have been positive. There were some complaints about the low visibility of the national authorities in the projects and about some shortcomings in communication, but, in general, interest in and commitment to the intervention seem evident.

This positive assessment of the project at the central levels contrasts at times with the limited involvement of the regional delegations of the Ministries of Labor. However, we have to acknowledge that these units often have few resources, and this prevents them from providing effective assistance to the project. There have been cases in which, perhaps owing to the type of intervention, other institutions of the Central Administration, particularly the Ministries of Education, have been more decidedly involved in the execution of the project.

The limited involvement of the Ministries of Agriculture is noteworthy in almost all cases, particularly since the interventions take place in their sphere of responsibility. The sectoral authorities have participated in varying degrees; in general, they scarcely participate and, at times, not at all; to the point where, in Costa Rica, for example, these authorities tend to deny the existence of the problem. Nevertheless, contrary to the limited involvement of the Ministries of Agriculture, we must underscore the efforts made by the Ministries of Education and, to a lesser degree, the Ministries of Health, together with the Ministries of Labor – the “natural” counterparts of the projects.

In all the countries there are other public institutions with responsibilities in the area of childhood (institutes for children and adolescents, offices of the first lady, child welfare institutions, etc.), which usually take part in the projects, in an attempt to combine efforts to tackle the problem.

- vi. Institution building does not appear to have been an important element of the Subregional Project. Indeed, one of the shortcomings noted has been the limited development of crosscutting actions at the regional level. The crosscutting components had very little significance. There is a dubious connection between the logic of the Subregional Project, the National Projects and the Action Programs. A subregional project without subregional components (with the exception of a monitoring system) becomes a sum of small projects – Action Programs that share relatively similar objectives.
- vii. With regard to the producers in the sectors concerned, the various National Projects have developed different strategies to involve them in the interventions. In general, appreciable results have been obtained and, in many cases (*Consejo Hondureño de la Empresa Privada*, FUNRURAL and ANACAFE in Guatemala, coffee producers of Jinotega and Matagalpa, etc), very interesting processes have been generated. It has to be acknowledged that, at the outset, there was some distrust of the objectives of the intervention and that the effect generated has been very positive.
- viii. The participation of parents, teachers and, in general, of the communities affected by the problem of child labor has been one of the most positive effects of the projects evaluated. Indeed, the evaluation team has noted that, on many occasions, important processes of social mobilization have been generated that constitute one of the most interesting experiences of the intervention. These processes have often been linked to schools and an increase in school attendance. The teachers have been a fundamental element in promoting and ensuring this mobilization.

- ix. The participation of the unions, and even other NGOs (in addition to those responsible for the execution of the Action Programs), does not appear to have been very significant, except on isolated occasions.
- x. It is extremely difficult to make an assessment of the social groups who have benefited from the project in relation to the target population included in the design. Information on the increase in the school population and on the reduction of absenteeism and failure seems to indicate that there is a relationship between the results obtained and those initially anticipated. Nonetheless, it should be recalled that an increase in school attendance and a decrease in repetition rates can be obtained without having much effect on the incidence of child labor in the areas of intervention. Bearing in mind the usual school timetable (about four hours a day), and limitations in the measurement of the data, it is possible that there is a distortion between what has been achieved to date and what was initially expected in the case of situations that are clearly seasonal.
- ix. The projects have done excellent work by combining efforts with similar or related initiatives on the same issue undertaken by other development agencies. Obviously, the IPEC initiatives head thematic actions on child labor, concentrating information and combining efforts. No duplication of efforts or lack of coordination with other development agents was identified.

6.2. Effectiveness

- i. As already indicated, it is extremely difficult to report on the achievement of the immediate objectives of each project considered, for various reasons:
 - ✓ The evaluation has not been made at the end of execution. In many cases, the accumulated delays in the project preparation period and during execution itself will mean that projects have to be extended by several months.
 - ✓ Many of the objectives were established in an aprioristic manner, without a realistic diagnosis of the initial status of the problem. This means that the objectives of some projects are clearly unattainable, because they surpass the reality of the problem.
 - ✓ Most of the data collected refers to the increase in school attendance and the decrease in school failure, situations that bear a relation to the reduction of child labor but that, strictly speaking, do not mean that child labor has been reduced.
 - ✓ The current data needs to be corroborated at significant moments – at harvest time when child labor is a significant reality – to assess the impact of the intervention.
- ii. One of the problems that make it difficult to assess effectiveness is the design of the projects, establishing a group of beneficiaries identified by name, on whom there is an attempt to “measure” the impact of the intervention. Currently, many of the follow-up and monitoring efforts have been focused on verifying the specific situation of all these persons and when they enter and exit employment. The difficulties of measuring all these situation “today he works, tomorrow he goes to

school, the next day he is working again, etc.”) and their limited significance, creates an added difficulty to determining the degree of effectiveness achieved.

- iii. As we have mentioned repeatedly, the evaluation team considers that, faced with a problem that, basically, includes a series of different problematic situations, a single solution was chosen, and this makes it difficult to attain the proposed objective. In addition to this initial shortcoming, the intervention logic itself suffers from some weaknesses concentrated in the health component essentially (which has a limited relationship to the objective of eliminating child labor) and, to a lesser extent, in the education component. It should also be recalled that the component about which there is most consensus regarding its relationship with the objective of the projects: the alternative income generation, is the one that, in most cases, has been developed least.
- iv. The concept of the “prevention” of child labor has caused difficulties when measuring the contribution made by the different projects to its achievement. Indeed, the team is doubtful that it is possible to establish an objectively verifiable indicator that measures this objective (“prevention”) directly. The solutions adopted (basically, including children who are in school) appear to be inadequate, because linking this school attendance to the “prevention” of child labor is, at the very least, unreliable.

It appears that, while the cost that a child represents to the family unit is greater than the income he can contribute (or, at best, while the cost of his schooling is relatively low), linking prevention to school attendance could be an acceptable relationship, but it ceases to be so when the child can contribute more income than the costs he generates. It is in this transfer from primary to secondary school that the drop-out rate is highest and when schooling appears to cease to act as a preventive measure (at least with the existing levels of investment in secondary education that these projects can provide).

To assess the impact of the Project on the prevention of child labor, this concept should be clearly defined at the outset, together with some kind of indicators that allow the net effect achieved to be determined. Indirect indicators will probably have to be used (monitoring bodies established, cases reported, reports processed) and also assessment of awareness raising and social mobilization. In any case, it appears that, at present, there is no clear indicator that establishes what the projects have achieved in preventing child labor in the areas of intervention.

- v. We have detected some factors that could have a very significant impact on effectiveness. Basically, we refer to the crisis in coffee prices that appears to have drastically reduced activity in this sector. This factor was not considered when the Project was formulated, but it is of fundamental importance when assessing the existing situation in the agricultural sector in the region.

In principle, the crisis in coffee prices tends to eliminate child labor from the sector in the same way as, owing to a decrease in demand (because of an excess of offer in other geographic areas), it also forces out adults. However, we suggest that this crisis could contribute to increasing child labor, to the extent that the producers try to maintain their profit margins in two alternative, although not complementary ways: on the one hand, they try to reduce production costs by substituting certain

activities and treatments by a more intensive use of labor (child labor); and, on the other, some producers try to focus their crop towards organic and/or quality markets, which would also require a more intensive use of labor.

The evaluation team has not been able to verify these two assertions, which appear fairly plausible, and which suggest the possibility of increased pressure on child labor. In the Project's areas of intervention, the team has tended to find abandoned plantations, where the shade trees are being extracted for sale as lumber, with very limited activity in those exploitations that continue to produce. Without having made an extensive study and recommending a detailed analysis of these assertions, the evaluation team tends to suppose that the crisis has had the effect of shrinking the demand for child labor, as it has on the hiring of adults.

- vi. Awareness raising has been a key component of the projects. As we have mentioned, the social mobilization processes are one of the most relevant results of the intervention. However, the duration of the execution of the awareness-raising component has frequently been excessively short and has tended to be carried out in the initial moments of project implementation. More time and resources should be devoted to this component.
- vii. The increase in Government commitment to tackle the problem of child labor is another crucial achievement of these projects. Nevertheless, the resources devoted to institution building have been very limited, so that it is debatable whether this commitment will be expressed in effective measures to combat the problem once the projects have been implemented.

6.3. Efficiency and alternative strategies

a) Global investment and results

- i. In general, efficiency, understood as the relationship between the resources made available to the intervention and the results achieved, may be considered adequate in most of the Action Programs. Nevertheless, at the level of the Subregional Project and the National Projects this assessment is almost impossible, because the results have not been quantified and do not coincide with those of the respective Action Programs.
- ii. The total contribution from IPEC to the Subregional Project (with USDOL resources) was slightly more than six million dollars. Of this total, the Action Programs Summary Outlines require contributions of 2.3 million dollars. According to this structure, the Action Programs involve about 38% of the total budget contributed by the donor agency.
- iii. Part of the total budget for the projects is devoted to the Action Programs, another to the crosscutting actions (which, apart from the issue of monitoring and, perhaps, the baselines, do not appear to require major amounts), and another part to administration and management. Even if we consider that most of the administration is carried out through the United Nations, which will require about 13% of the budget, and that another part of the budget is devoted to the cost of the national coordinators, program and technical assistance officers, the costs that are not directly

attributable to the Action Programs are quite high, although within the acceptable. Thus, only 38% of the financing agency's total contribution goes towards the costs most directly arising from actions aimed at eliminating child labor, which appears to be rather low. However, this affirmation can be nuanced, since local contributions are concentrated in the Action Programs, so that if we refer to the total figures, the percentage of the total budget devoted to the Action Programs will be higher.

b) Disbursement by component

- iv. Among the components included in the different Action Programs, those related to alternative income generation have tended to be less significant and their disbursement has met with more problems. This is a serious issue, because, as we have repeatedly mentioned, and as most of those interviewed at all levels of participation have stated, it is the component that has a more direct relationship with the specific objectives of the different projects. In general, we have observed a certain bias tending to favor the educational component to the detriment of the others.
- v. We have mentioned repeatedly that the evaluation has identified a limited relationship between some of the activities implemented and the goals pursued. This is particularly significant in the case of activities in the health component and, to a lesser degree, in that of education. The results of the interventions on the prevention and elimination of child labor would probably have been very similar even if the activities such as training midwives, publishing first-aid manuals, Christmas parties and other matters already mentioned, had not been executed; this could indicate a certain level of inefficiency that is easy to isolate and correct.
- vi. The creation and implementation of the child labor monitoring system has used resources that were not justified in relation to the results obtained. The changes in the scope and dimensions of this component have been very negative in terms of efficiency. It was only in the final stages of execution, when a more practical early warning system was chosen, which reduced the level of information required on the target population, that this disproportion began to be resolved.

A similar comment can be made about the baselines, whose utilization of resources (especially in time) appear to have been inconsistent with their usefulness. It seems that, only in the final stages, have they become more useful.

c) Time periods and administration

- vii. Important delays have been detected in the approval and implementation of the different Action Programs. There have been too many modifications of the timelines and the budgets. The causes of these delays and modifications are varied, but the main ones include the lack of definition in the IPEC structure, an excessive centralization of decision-making at certain times, policy changes in the executing and donor agencies, excessive information requirements, etc.
- viii. The management processes have not contributed to improving the general efficiency of the intervention:

- ✓ The limited decentralization of decision-making and the procedures put in practice have delayed implementation of the initiatives. During the execution period these situations have tended to improve.
- ✓ The management structure presents some specific “bottlenecks”, where we have identified a concentration of tasks. The San José office appears to be the most evident case; it receives 18 reports of the same number of programs that have to be examined and processed. These tasks overload the personnel with work and prevent them from devoting themselves to other more relevant tasks.
- ✓ Coordinating the implementing agencies consumes resources that could more efficiently be devoted to tasks more closely related to implementation of the programmed activities.
- ✓ The formats in which the information is collected and managed should be simplified and, at least, unified, with longer time limits
- ✓ As we have already commented, there appears to be some contradiction between the territorial logic that IPEC has maintained for the series of interventions and the sectoral logic on which the Subregional Project is based. This contradiction between the two logics leads to a certain lack of definition of the functions of the project coordinators and the IPEC national coordinators, which does not help promote efficient management processes.

d) General recommendations

- ✓ The Project should be planned so that intermediate instances are eliminated (and the format of Subregional Project – National Projects – crosscutting actions – Action Programs – specific activities shortened), generating a more direct relationship between the means and the ends.
- ✓ Budgets should be consolidated, starting from the activities towards the Action Programs, clearly earmarking the budgetary envelopes for crosscutting actions and those that will be applied to the different forms of management (UNDP, personnel working on the projects, subcontractors). This does not mean abandoning the present systems, which, from a management perspective, have proved useful in controlling the origin and application of funds; but they should be accompanied by a budgetary structure that is better adapted to results-based management.
- ✓ During this process, additional resources should be assigned to the components that are more directly related to eliminating child labor.
- ✓ The management structure should be enhanced taking advantage of the capacity installed by IPEC in the subregion, decentralizing decision making towards the countries and strengthening crosscutting technical assistance.
- ✓ We also suggest that the management procedures should be simplified, particularly those relating to control and supervision, reducing the requirements for information to essential aspects; harmonizing the periods for controlling

information so as not to duplicate efforts, and simplifying formulas and standardizing documents.

6.4. Effects and sustainability

i. In general, the positive effects that have been identified are much more important than the negative ones. In particular, we should highlight:

- ✓ The increase in the school attendance rates in the zones where projects have been executed, with a general improvement in the quality of education; this can be measured both in the information on the decrease in school failure, and in the increase in attendance and the reduction in the dropout rate. Evidently, these results go beyond the target population itself, which means that they should be considered indirect effects.
- ✓ In general, the depiction of the problem of child labor appears to have significantly raised awareness (social and institutional) and this has helped generate a process of integral childhood protection, which goes far beyond the objectives of the project.
- ✓ Other positive effects linked to social mobilization are inter-institutional coordination, with more ambitious purposes than merely identifying the problem in question, and an increase in the capacity of most of the institutions involved.
- ✓ It is difficult to report on the effects that the projects have had on gender issues but, in general, the evaluation team has been able to observe that in most of the watch group committees (or other similar organizations established for detecting and reporting on the problem), women play an essential role and have been able to occupy decision-making roles which, prior to the project, were closed to them.

ii. The negative unforeseen effects are even more difficult to define and are merely guesses that would need to be confirmed using a more precise analysis.

- ✓ It appears that there may have been some distortion in the educational systems in some areas. This could have occurred because the impact of the projects in determined communities and/or schools has meant that the limited public resources available are concentrated in those areas, neglecting others that are relatively similar. This appears to be the case of the Guatemala project, among others, where the educational authorities mentioned that State scholarships were concentrated excessively in the Project's zones of intervention.
- ✓ There appear to have been cases in which the capacity of absorption of the schools has been filled to the limit, and this could result in a decline in the quality of the education offered in the future.
- ✓ It is also possible that situations are being generated in which the institutions involved have increased their operating costs beyond their possibilities.
- ✓ But the most serious effect could be the "expulsion" effect that some projects appear to have caused. As a result of the awareness-raising work and the

pressures exerted on the producers, the latter have decided to limit drastically the number of child workers on their exploitations. This has meant that the children (often persuaded by their own family) have moved into other types of child labor, at times more hazardous and detrimental. Withdrawing children from one kind of work without generating a different socio-economic climate could have very negative effects.

- iii. In general, the effects on the adolescent population appear to have been much less significant. We believe that it has been much more difficult to have an impact on the population that is already on the threshold of its definitive insertion into the workforce, than on younger children. We have already mentioned that ensuring the schooling of the younger children seems simpler, by merely covering the costs of access, which can be summarized as transport, materials, clothes and food. However, access costs more for adolescents, secondary schools are further away in the rural areas, the materials are more expensive and, at times, it is necessary to stay overnight in the place where the school is located. This increase in costs combines with the possibility that, where the market allows it, adolescents can generate significant income for the family unit, so that their schooling is more complicated. This will probably be one of the future challenges of new projects.
- iii. The sustainability of the effects arising from the intervention is generally rather uncertain, for several reasons. First, the activities that appear to have made the most significant contribution to the achievement of the proposed objectives are basically of a welfare nature. As the evaluation team was repeatedly informed during the meetings it held, from the point of view of the beneficiary families, the most important actions were the donation of school materials, scholarships, school meals, etc. These actions have contributed directly to increasing school attendance (especially of small children). The problem is that the sustainability of this type of activity cannot be guaranteed in most cases.
- iv. The limited tasks undertaken in the alternative income generation component to date also contribute to decreasing the intervention's possibilities of sustainability. If the increase in the available family income is due, above all, to a decrease in costs and not to an increase in earnings, and if this decrease in costs (via subsidies) cannot be maintained, the situation will tend to return to the point of departure once the available resources are exhausted.

Apparently, the success of the interventions has focused on the permanent schooling of the younger children (the schooling of those who did not attend, and the decrease in absenteeism and the repetition rate among those who attended) – and, of course, on the significant impact that awareness raising and social mobilization have had on the problem. This has been achieved, fundamentally, by subsidizing schooling costs (scholarships, school meals, uniforms, materials). The local authority's difficulty to continue these subsidies is a risk for the sustainability of the results achieved.

- v. The monitoring system that was supposed to be implemented at the start of execution has proved inadequate for local capacities and resources and, consequently, will be difficult to sustain. The new monitoring systems that were being developed during the final stage of the projects have better perspectives of sustainability, although there is very little time available for implementing them.

- vi. Institution building has not been developed sufficiently to guarantee the sustainability of the systems implemented by the project. Despite the interest shown by the central authorities in all the countries, the local institutions often do not have either the resources or the capacity essential for continuing the work that has been done on their own.
- vii. Dissemination of lessons learned and good practice has been very limited to date. As we have already mentioned, the crosscutting components of the Action Programs of the Subregional Project have had little importance so far. This is another challenge for the future of the projects to eliminate child labor in the sector.
- viii. Little can be said about the aspects that are of particular interest to ILO, such as international labor standards, equality between men and women, and protection of the environment. We can report favorably on the first point, but cannot comment specifically on the other two, although we have not detected negative effects.

We recommend that, in future designs, an additional effort should be made to incorporate gender issues into the interventions. Undoubtedly, the consequences of child labor in the agricultural sector cause much more concern in the case of girl children, whose schooling as they grow older is much more complicated.

The action strategy for particularly hazardous work is being studied at present, and some publications are beginning to circulate. What the evaluation team has been able to detect is that most child labor in the coffee sector is concentrated in harvesting, which is not a particularly arduous activity (although all child labor is demanding); however, there are children to take part in other more hazardous tasks such as the application of chemicals, pruning (the pruning of the shade trees is particularly hazardous), haulage, etc.

7. Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations

7.1. CONCLUSIONS	7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>1. The Subregional Project for the elimination of child labor in agricultural areas comprises a series of actions that have in common a sector, an intervention strategy, and a source of financing.</p> <p>The series of interventions that IPEC carries out in the agricultural sector and in the zone are not included in this project and there are major limitations with regard to the crosscutting and, specifically, the subregional aspects.</p>	<p>1. Redefine the Subregional Project on child labor in the sector, taking into account the crosscutting and subregional aspects that go beyond direct actions.</p> <p>To this end, it is important to enhance the exchange of experiences and the generation of synergies between the different interventions, taking into account the characteristics of each Government and each area.</p> <p>The program should also include activities designed specifically to strengthen general policies on the</p>

7.1. CONCLUSIONS	7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS
	elimination of child labor in the area.
<p>2. The problem(s) justifying the intervention appear to have been defined inadequately.</p> <p>Moreover, the problem(s) are tackled using a standardized strategy that is repeated at the different planning levels. The strategy includes some components that contribute little to responding to the situation identified.</p>	<p>2. Identify the fundamental problems, based on a diagnosis of the situation that is as participatory as possible.</p> <p>Intervention strategies adapted to each specific case can be based on this diagnosis.</p>
<p>3. The planning structure contains elements that have proved difficult to implement.</p> <p>The structure of a subregional project, a project for each country, and their action programs, is complex and contributes little to the planning process.</p>	<p>3. Study other possible planning structures that simplify the elements of the intervention logic.</p> <p>A Subregional Project for the sector (irrespective of the crop where the problem is identified) could be considered, together with a series of territorial Action Programs complemented by actions that crosscut those programs</p>
<p>4. We have been unable to find a series of explicit criteria to guide the selection of the areas of intervention and the target populations.</p>	<p>4. Establish a framework of criteria and priorities that facilitates and justifies the selection of areas of intervention and target populations. Those criteria should be validated in the most participatory way possible with the institutions and organizations involved in their implementation..</p>
<p>5. We have been unable to find precise criteria for the selection of the agencies. There appears to be no directive on the characteristics of the agencies or on the desirability of limiting their responsibility to a single component or to a series of components. The implementation process has provided useful information for establishing such criteria, and also for determining the most appropriate mechanisms for assigning responsibilities among the participants</p>	<p>5. Draft a directive on the characteristics of the implementing agencies and on their responsibilities by component and/or project.</p> <p>Define criteria for their selection and incentives for their participation.</p>

7.1. CONCLUSIONS	7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>6. In most cases, the baselines that were prepared did not prove to be a useful planning tool.</p>	<p>6. It is necessary to define a simpler model for analyzing the existing conditions than the one being developed, in which the diagnostic component substitutes the survey component. However, this does not mean that the objectives should not be quantified once the intervention has been designed.</p> <p>The diagnosis should be related to the agents responsible for managing the intervention and be of a participatory nature.</p>
<p>7. The designs have not been very participatory and have been affected by decisions taken before project identification (goals previously quantified, available resources, time of execution, areas of intervention, agricultural products, implementing agencies).</p>	<p>7. Prepare participatory designs based on the diagnoses that have been made and establishing “optimums” that, subsequently, must be put in practice until an intervention with realistic objectives has been defined</p>
<p>8. The purpose of the system for monitoring child labor proposed in the Subregional Project has never been sufficiently clear.</p> <p>We have to acknowledge that a great deal of effort has been made, but the application of the monitoring system has generally been erratic, it has been confused with the follow-up on the actions undertaken, it has used considerable resources, and the information generated is of limited relevance.</p>	<p>8. Support efforts to design and implement systems to monitor child labor, based on local capacities and resources.</p> <p>These systems cannot provide continuous and permanent information on the situation of the target populations. It seems more logical to move towards warning and response systems, with less precise but more operational data. These systems have a high correlation to the organization and mobilization efforts undertaken.</p> <p>Systems for monitoring child labor should not be confused with project and program follow-up systems. The latter should focus on implementing activities and not on achieving objectives and results.</p>
<p>9. Some lack of definition has been detected in the functions and responsibilities of the different agents</p>	<p>9. Define clearly the functions and responsibilities of the different national agents involved in the day-to-day</p>

7.1. CONCLUSIONS	7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS
involved in execution (implementing agencies, project and national coordinators, the subregional office and the central offices).	management of the projects.
<p>10. Although the participation of the direct counterpart has usually been significant and adequate, at times, other actors appear to have had more importance: in the public sector (Ministry of Education, mayoralties, etc.) or the private sector (particularly, implementing agencies).</p> <p>To the contrary, other significant public actors have played a very limited role, particularly the Ministries of Agriculture.</p>	<p>10. Involve the direct counterpart from the very outset and reinforce its leadership with regard to the other institutions..</p> <p>Establish coordination committees to encourage the participation of all the public actors. It is important to negotiate from the very start what each institution can contribute to implementation and to future sustainability.</p> <p>Establish standardized procedures that facilitate providing the Ministries of Labor with information on the progress of the projects.</p>
<p>11. The above-mentioned weaknesses in design and management have resulted in delays and postponements in the decision-making and document approval processes and some difficulties in the allocation of the available resources.</p>	<p>11. Although the solution of the problems detected in the design and in the definition of functions and responsibilities would make a significant contribution to resolving this matter, we suggest that special attention should be paid to establishing flexible and standardized procedures in the work plans.</p> <p>Decentralization processes should receive greater support, by giving greater responsibilities to the project coordinators and the national coordinators. The project coordinator's authority should be enhanced with regard to the implementing agencies. The technical assistance role of the program officials and the principal technical advisers should be strengthened.</p>
<p>12. The above has resulted in a complex system of information and control that requires significant resources and is almost inoperable..</p>	<p>12. Reduce information requirements to the essential aspects of the projects; modify the periods for controlling the information so as not to duplicate efforts by the parties, and to simplify</p>

7.1. CONCLUSIONS	7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS
	<p>formulas and standardize documents.</p> <p>We consider that follow-up reports should be prepared and presented by project and not by component.</p>
<p>13. We have observed a lack of coordination in the implementation of some of the different components of the projects, which has resulted in the duplication of some actions, above all in the case of awareness raising.</p> <p>In addition, the relative importance of these components has not been reflected in the resources available for each one, or in their duration.</p>	<p>13. Once the intervention logic for the projects has been established, we recommend that the work plan should be completed with a programming by components and their activities, including estimates of time, budget, and assignment of responsibilities for each activity.</p>
<p>14. In general, we have observed that, based on the activities implemented in the “awareness-raising” component in the areas of intervention, there has been an increase of awareness about the problem of child labor and its consequences, in both the institutions involved and in the entrepreneurial sector, as well as among the parents and the children themselves.</p>	<p>14. The awareness-raising process implemented has produced an interesting experience that should be systematized; however, some activities that are related much more to visibility and publicity than to awareness raising and social mobilization should be excluded from the component.</p> <p>More time should be allocated for execution of this component.</p>
<p>15. In most cases, the “health” component seems to have achieved the expected result, although it has a very limited relationship to the specific objective.</p>	<p>15. Reconsider the desirability of retaining this component.</p> <p>Should the decision be affirmative, it seems more logical to focus on the activities of this component that are more directly linked to the elimination of child labor.</p>
<p>16. The expected results in the “education” component, basically expressed as an increase in school attendance and a decrease in school failure (absenteeism and repetition) have been significantly achieved.</p>	<p>16. Reconsider the desirability of retaining this component.</p> <p>Should the decision be affirmative, it seems more logical to focus on the activities of this component that are more directly linked to the elimination of child labor.</p>

7.1. CONCLUSIONS	7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS
	<p>In this component, it is important to assign greater responsibilities to central and local education authorities.</p> <p>Also strengthen the actions undertaken in the component that are aimed at groups of adolescents.</p>
<p>17. The principal activities that have ensured that the two preceding results (education and health) were achieved are those that consist in giving supplies, services and subsidies to the population (scholarships, school meals, materials, uniforms, etc.).</p>	<p>17. Reconsider retaining these activities, the sustainability of the effects achieved and their possible inclusion in the component to improve family income.</p>
<p>18. With some exceptions, the expected results have not been achieved in the “alternative income generation ” component.</p>	<p>18. Reconsider this component, increasing its overall importance and commencing its execution almost from the start of the Action Programs.</p> <p>This component should include both improving family incomes and generating alternative income activities.</p> <p>Include intervention strategies that go beyond granting micro-credit. Specifically activities to promote employment and to improve vocational training would appear to be very suitable, and this is being analyzed in the context of several interventions.</p>
<p>19. It is very difficult to report on the achievement of the specific objective of the programs to eliminate child labor in the coffee sector, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ the existing logic between results and objective is inadequate, ✓ some results have not yet been achieved (alternative income generation, which is the most important component in relation to the objective), ✓ the duration of the implementation of the Action 	<p>19. Improve the logic and coherence of project designs, paying more attention to the relationship between the results and the objective as well as to external factors, and establishing an operative system to measure the specific objective.</p> <p>Extend the period for project implementation, making the process of identification and design more flexible and improving decision-making procedures.</p>

7.1. CONCLUSIONS	7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Programs has been too short to have significant impact,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ the potential impact of specific key external factors was not taken into account in the projects. 	
<p>20. There were more positive than negative effects. The former include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ increase in school attendance and decrease in school failure (above and beyond the target population) ✓ improvement in teaching quality, ✓ exposure of hidden problems, ✓ collaboration of institutions, ✓ acceleration of institutional processes for the elimination of child labor, ✓ establishment of child protection mechanisms. <p>The negative effects included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ excessive teaching load in schools, ✓ distortion of educational systems (scholarships, materials, etc), ✓ expulsion of children towards other types of more hazardous work, ✓ raised expectations, ✓ increase in operating costs of institutions. 	<p>20. For future project designs, the positive effects should be more directly linked to the target populations and not to the general population.</p> <p>The negative effects should be evaluated with more attention on future occasions.</p>
<p>21. It is impossible to emit an opinion on some of the effects that are usually considered, particularly gender, the environment, the private sector, etc.</p> <p>Regarding the issues of special interest for ILO, such as international work standards, equality between men and women, and environmental protection, we can report favorably on the first, but it is impossible to comment on the other two, although</p>	<p>21. More attention should be paid to all the elements indicated in this conclusion when future projects are conceived and designed.</p> <p>Efforts to analyze the particular danger that participation in this sector represents for child workers should continue.</p>

7.1. CONCLUSIONS	7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>no negative effect has been observed.</p> <p>With regard to the strategy for particularly hazardous work, it seems evident that this issue is related more to commercial agriculture than to coffee.</p>	
<p>22. In general, the overall sustainability of the effects of the intervention are doubtful.</p> <p>The results have been based excessively on the implementation of activities that are basically of a welfare nature.</p>	<p>22. For future interventions, it is fundamental to strengthen the component of improving income and generation of employment alternatives.</p> <p>For activities of a welfare nature, transfer mechanisms should be identified, at the design stage, and also institutions willing to assume operating and maintenance costs.</p> <p>To enhance the possibilities of sustainability, prior to execution, it is essential to establish some realistic conditions that guarantee a certain commitment by the public institutions, to decrease the welfare nature of the intervention and strengthen components relating to investment, and promotion of income and employment, and to recognize the need for longer implementation periods.</p>